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On reading Bishop Flavin

CONNORS, HOYT & THEIR CRITICS

Flavin had it right

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Robert G. Hoyt ["The Catholic Conscience," February 14] and Rev. Russell B. Connors, Jr., ["The Church's Teaching," March 13] have taken Bishop Glennon Flavin of Lincoln, Nebraska [now retired] to task for a pastoral letter in which he said that Catholic physicians who prescribe contraceptives and Catholic couples who use them are engaging in seriously immoral actions and "may not receive holy Communion without committing sacrilege." According to Rev. Connors, Bishop Flavin "has it all wrong."

I think that Rev. Connors has it all wrong and that Bishop Flavin is right on target. No one other than God, of course, can read the human heart, and Bishop Flavin is not seeking to do this. Like Rev. Connors and all instructed Catholics, Bishop Flavin realizes that no one is subjectively guilty of mortal sin unless one realizes that the action one chooses to do is gravely immoral and nevertheless freely chooses to do it. But his point is that contraception is gravely immoral, and that Catholics ought to realize that it is. They ought to realize that it is because the church, which speaks with a more than human authority, has always, in its teaching, judged that contraception is gravely immoral. Moreover, as the Fathers of Vatican Council II remind us, "in questions of birth regulation, the children of the church...are forbidden to use methods disapproved of by the teaching authority of the church in its interpretation of the divine law" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 51).

Some Catholics, undoubtedly, practice contraception "in good faith," erroneously thinking it to be morally permissible. Some other Catholics, undoubtedly, have abortions in some trying circumstances in "good faith," while others, undoubtedly, do other things that are objectively immoral in "good faith." But the "good faith" of such Catholics needs to be challenged. They need to be reminded that the church is our God-given guide to life with Christ. We have no other, no better. The moral teachings of the church are not foreign intrusions to the conscience of the Catholic, who ought to be connaturally willing to shape his or her life in accordance with them. This is the basic message of Bishop Flavin, and it needs to be heard. Hoyt and Connors remind me of William Buckley who, commenting on Pope John XXIII's teaching in *Mater et magistra*, said "*Mater, sí, magistra, no.*" The truth is that there is within the church a more than human teaching authority, and that Catholics understand this and its significance for their moral life.

WILLIAM E. MAY

The writer is Michael J. McGivney professor of moral theology at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, Washington, D.C.

Connors 'amazing'

Yonkers, N.Y.

To the Editors: Russell B. Connors's article is nothing less than amazing. On the pastoral letter of Bishop Flavin, the subtitle reads, "Bishop Flavin Has It Wrong," and the author says the bishop "misrepresented" and "distorted" the official teaching of the church. Amazing!

On the official and normative teaching of the church, quite clearly the bishop has it right and distorts nothing.

Connors seems to accept the formal teaching that artificial contraception is "intrinsically evil" (the term is from *Humanae vitae* and *Casti connubii* before it). He is stunningly silent about the extensive and repeated teachings of John Paul II on this subject, but that, of course, would not help his broadside.

As with most nuanced dissenters, instead of arguing the merits or demerits of contraception, they change the subject to something else—usually questions of authority and conscience formation.

Connors charges that Bishop Flavin's expressions presume a "theology of revelation" that eliminates distinctions about the degrees of authority in church teaching and excludes the possibility of legitimate dissent.

Neatly, Connors assigns no theological note and nowhere reveals just what degree of authority this particular teaching has. Serious studies (Ford, Grisez) argue by Vatican I and Vatican II criteria that this teaching enjoys the status of ordinary, universal, infallible teaching to be held by all. That study has nowhere been refuted, only ignored. Pope John Paul II teaches (June 5, 1987 and March 14, 1988) that this is not a matter of "free discussion" among theologians and pastors, and that there are no exceptions to this teaching for a correct conscience (November 12, 1988).

Surely, it is a subject much discussed and the degree of authority does not derive from a single mention in *Humanae vitae* but from a "constant doctrine" (*HV*, 11) before and since. In the realm of formal moral teachings, it's hard to think of a subject taught

(Continued on page 28)

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COMMONWEAL

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Heart & soul

By some estimates 500,000 or more protesters gathered on the Washington Mall before the Capitol on April 5 to demonstrate their support for unrestricted access to abortion. It may have been the largest mass rally in Washington's history. Organized by the National Abortion Rights Action League, the National Organization of Women, and other abortion-rights groups, the protest received the vocal support of both remaining candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, Governor Bill Clinton and former Governor Edmund "Jerry" Brown. Abortion-rights activists, the vast majority of whom identify with the Democratic party, are concerned that the Supreme Court may weaken or overturn *Roe* v. *Wade* after hearing a case (*Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*) contesting the constitutionality of a Pennsylvania law that imposes modest restrictions on abortion. Indeed, NARAL and other groups now want Congress to pass the Freedom of Choice Act, thereby translating *Roe*'s deregulation of abortion into statutory law and removing it from the reach of state legislatures ("'Roe' redux," *Commonweal*, March 13). The April demonstration was meant to give a graphic reminder of the electoral strength of prochoice forces. "I have a uterus and I vote," read signs carried by protesters.

On the Thursday before the Washington march, Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor Robert P. Casey delivered a little-remarked-upon address at the Notre Dame Law School. "You may have heard of the case that is before the Supreme Court called *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*," the governor said. "Let me introduce myself. I'm Casey."

Despite his status as a self-described "prolife Democrat," Casey has shown a remarkable ability to get Pennsylvanians with and without uteruses to vote for him. He was re-elected by more than a million votes over a pro-abortion Republican in 1990, and was instrumental in championing his protégé, Harris Wofford—who largely shared Casey's views on abortion—to an upset victory over former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh for a Senate seat last fall. Pennsylvania's abortion law, if upheld by the Court, will require that women give informed consent to the procedure; it would impose a twenty-four-hour waiting period; and would require that minors have the consent of at least one parent (with reasonable exceptions) and that a wife notify her husband (with similar exceptions). "We must fight for life," Casey said at Notre Dame, "with the same passion that Democrats throughout history have fought for liberty.... Heart and soul—that's what presidential elections are all about. That's when people are moved more by the candidate's values than the candidate's programs."

Casey used tough words in assessing the damage the Democrats have inflicted on themselves by making abortion on demand a litmus test for any candidate seeking the party's presidential nomination. "The special interests controlling the party are

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absolutely intolerant of any view on abortion other than their own extreme view," he argued. More important, what protection the law extends to the unborn lies at the nexus of social and moral questions upon which the national Democratic party notoriously continues to flounder. For many Americans, Casey says, *Roe* v. *Wade* has come to symbolize a "host of anti-family policies." "They [middle-class Democrats] saw *Roe* as a direct frontal attack on traditional family relationships," Casey says. "Between husband and wife. Parent and child. An attack that short-circuited a consensus [on abortion] that had already formed among most of the states. A consensus that said abortion was a crime."

These are strong words, and perhaps they run the risk of oversimplifying the genuine conflict many Americans—including both prochoice and prolife advocates of both genders—feel about this complex issue and the deeper ambivalence they might have about recriminalizing abortion nearly twenty years after *Roe*. But coming from the popular governor of a major industrial state, this critique of the Democratic party needs to be heard. Indeed, a revealing poll of the abortion-rights marchers, reported by Richard Morin, the *Washington Post*'s director of polling (*Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, April 13-19), essentially confirmed Casey's analysis of the gulf that separates the rigid prochoice position from the beliefs and values of most Americans. In brief: those attending the rally were significantly younger, more liberal, more Democratic, better educated, whiter, (and therefore presumably wealthier), and of course more female than the nation as a whole.

This demographic profile translated into predictably libertarian views on abortion, with nine out of ten marchers supporting abortion as a form of birth control for women who do not want another child. Among Americans as a whole, only one-third support such a position. Nine out of ten protesters also opposed the idea of parental notification for teen-agers seeking abortions. Only 18 percent of Americans think such adolescent autonomy good social policy. A similar discrepancy exists between the marchers and most Americans on requiring spousal permission for an abortion.

The *Post*'s findings were not exactly news but merely confirmed, in a focused way, what polls routinely show: most Americans are not comfortable with abortion on demand, and want the practice legally discouraged. Yet abortion-rights activists, and the Democratic party that rushes to embrace them, reject this position out of hand, and will tolerate no restrictions whatever. In adopting such a one-sided view, Casey argues, the Democrats fatally alienate a potential majority of voters who would naturally rally to the party's progressive economic and social message. Casey is blunt: if the Democrats' position on abortion isn't qualified, "the same special interests [will] lead the misguided Democratic party right off the same cliff."

In the deafening rhetoric of the recent Washington march, few party leaders are prepared to listen to Casey's warnings. Pragmatic party theorists argue that economic misery, not homilies on family values, will open the doors of the White House to the Democrats again. Such conventional wisdom should be less secure, however, after the drubbing Democrats have taken on "value issues" since the advent of Ronald Reagan. Democrats might consider how relative the appeal to economic insecurity can be in the context of the deeper social and cultural values voters seek to affirm in national elections. Elections are increasingly decided by independent swing voters, whose confidence is often won on issues as far removed from their pocketbooks as the prolife agenda Governor Casey speaks of so passionately.

Sociologist James Davison Hunter (*Culture Wars*, Basic Books) has noted—and the fervor of the Washington march exemplified—that the public discourse on abortion is "more polarized than the American public itself....Middling positions and the nuances of moral commitment, then, get played into the grid of opposing rhetorical extremes." Clearly, in endorsing abortion on demand the Democratic party has identified itself with one extreme—and thus provided the Republicans with plenty of ammunition for portraying Democrats as elitists beholden to unrepresentative special interests. As long as the party excludes "middling positions" and the "nuances of moral commitment" felt by those uneasy with *Roe*, it sends a message of intolerance, even arrogance, while depriving itself of the coalition-building skills it needs. As Casey and many other Democrats realize, the political reality—and the votes—lie somewhere in the middle. In this context, the April 5 rally was a mirage, indicating only that the Democratic leadership still hasn't the slightest inkling of how destructive advocacy of the *Roe* precedent is, or of how most Americans want to see some sort of workable compromise.

AN EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

RIGHTS 'R US

KIDS, HILLARY & THE LAW

Back in 1973, when the children's rights movement first loomed and then burgeoned, I had all the ammunition I needed to pepper it with grapeshot: a newly minted master's degree in American history, a newly published book on day care, and a recently completed stint investigating New York City's foster-care system. Clattering on to my soap box, I fired the first round, informing all and sundry that this was just one more effort by a bunch of professional do-gooders (in this case lawyers) to reform the reforms of previous generations of professional "child savers" (social workers, educators, probation officers, and therapists). My second salvo said there was a difference, in that the earlier saviors really did know something about children. I was, in short, skeptical about adopting "children's rights" as a slogan and a strategy. Lawyers can't heal families. Rights talk doesn't promote responsibility-taking.

I found particular grist for my skepticism in an article written by one Hillary Rodham (now famous, as Hillary Rodham Clinton, for standing by her man). Her "Children under the Law," was the lead in a two-part special report of the *Harvard Educational Review* (November 1973), titled "The Rights of Children."

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Basically a summary of then-recent Supreme Court decisions, Clinton's article discussed and quietly advocated two kinds of "rights" for children: adult rights that might be extended to "competent" children, and rights extended to children with special needs. Clinton's well-polished law review article seemed to me historically and sociologically naive.

But it was a model of reasonableness in comparison to a Children's Bill of Rights that was also a product of the children's rights movement. This bill of rights urged that children be granted the right to self-determination, to alternative home environments, to educate themselves, to freedom from physical punishment, to sexual freedom, to economic power, to political power, etc.—little Jacobins unite! Much of this was inspired by the effervescence of the late sixties: Woodstock, sexual liberation, and "flower children," and focused on cultural, sexual, and economic liberation for children, and, as I then preached, perpetual servitude for parents.

The other branch of this rights movement, represented by Clinton, was part of a long, distinguished, and not entirely successful American tradition of philanthropic concern for the welfare of orphaned, delinquent, and troubled children. (In fact, Clinton wrote the article as staff attorney for the Children's Defense Fund, now one of the country's most effective and respected advocates for children, but one that does not seem to have pursued the "rights" question.) Children cannot speak for themselves; when their parents cannot or will not, others must speak and act on their behalf. Thus for many years, social workers "spoke" for children in foster care or orphanages and the judicial system had its probation officers, detention centers, and family and juvenile courts.

In the early seventies, it was the lawyers' turn. (Or maybe all of the social workers had become lawyers.) The law could correct injustices visited upon children not only by their parents, but by all of those systems created to save children. The novelty here was the interest of lawyers and the use of "rights" language with its focus on constitutional protections, on the quality of children's legal representation, and on the due process procedures of child-serving institutions, such as schools, foster-care agencies, juvenile courts, and detention centers. In addition, the lawyers could busy themselves carving out a whole new area: the right of competent children to act on their own behalf, even against their parents' judgments or interests.

Clinton's new-found fame sent me back to reread "Children under the Law." I can see now that my flight to the soap box was overly dramatic and probably unnecessary—lawyers and rights language have had no more luck improving the lot of children than did social workers and adjustment language. If you haven't got "good enough" parents (to paraphrase the British child psychiatrist, D.W. Winnicott), you've got troubles no matter who speaks for you.

True, the liberationist agenda (maybe we should just call it libertarian) has worked its way into the ordinary lives of many adolescents, thanks mostly to free market forces, television, and drugs. On the legal side, there have been changes in laws governing the treatment of children by courts, schools, and child-care agencies. But nothing Clinton—or other advocates—wrote back in 1973 about children's rights has materially changed the condition of children and adolescents when they lack parents who speak for them. In fact, the situation of many children is worse than ever. And when even lawyers cannot change this situation, we really *are* in trouble.

As we actually seem to be: Senator Daniel Moynihan has recently coined the phrase, "the zero-parent family" to describe the growing number of children "orphaned" by addictions, AIDS, and the inherent fragility of single-parent families. The circle has been closed and there is talk of bringing back the orphanage and opening residential schools.

About Hillary Clinton one thing is clear: She didn't have the answers back in 1973. She probably doesn't have them now. So whatever job she might get in a new administration, please God, don't let it have to do with children.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

EUROPE'S SCRAMBLED EGG

MODERN, MODERATE MUSLIMS

Bosnia-Herzegovina has been variously described as an ethnic cocktail, a scrambled egg, and a patchwork quilt. It is the only former Yugoslav republic where no single ethnic group dominates. Of its 4.3 million people, 44 percent are Muslim Slavs, 31 percent Orthodox and Serb, and 17 percent Catholic and Croat. So complex is their distribution that the present civil war in Bosnia is even more tragic than the war in Croatia. As Rajko Dukiv, a Bosnian Serb, put it not long before the recent escalation of hostilities, "If the Gordian knot of Bosnia is not untied to the satisfaction of all three communities, we'll have another Beirut."

As a result of centuries during which its Muslims, Serbs, and Croats generally existed in remarkable peace, intermarriage has been common. All are fellow Slavs and all speak Serbo-Croat. Unlike Yugoslavia's other major Muslim group, the Albanians, Bosnian Muslims are not a despised, barely literate people speaking an alien tongue and out-breeding everyone else. They are an integral element in Bosnian society, and thanks to fiscal benefits enjoyed under the Ottomans, come from more prosperous backgrounds than Bosnia's Christians. The British journalist Nick Thorpe found Bosnians the most open, kind people in Eastern Europe. But they have a shadow side too.

The real divisions among Bosnian's are cultural and religious differences that stem from Bosnia's history, its terrain of isolated river basins, and its geopolitical position as a cockpit for national and religious rivalry. Bosnia lies athwart the crucial historical and religious "fault line" between Byzantine Eastern and Latin Western Christendom that cleaves the Balkan Peninsula from northeast to southwest. It became a stronghold of the medieval

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dualist heresy Bogomilism, whose members suffered intense persecution from the Catholic church. When Bosnia fell to the Ottoman Empire (1463), Islam found ready converts among the Bogomils, whose nobles were allowed to retain their lands.

Traditionally, Croats and Muslims were closer to each other than to the Serbs. In the eighteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburgs invited the Serbs to defend their frontier against the Turks, and in 1878, Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. But they perpetuated injustice to such an extent that World War I was sparked there. Neither the Austrians nor the Serbs who dominated interwar Yugoslavia tried to alleviate the chronic poverty of Bosnia's peasants. During World War II, Bosnia was annexed by a Nazi puppet Croatia whose genocidal Catholic Ustasa government perpetrated unspeakable atrocities. The Serbs were the first victims, but every group—Serbian Cetniks, pro-Axis Muslims, and Tito's partisans—wreaked vengeance on each other. Muslims suffered atrocities at the hands of both Croat Ustasas and Serb Cetniks.

Much ink has been spilt on the major protagonists of the Yugoslav civil war, the Serbs and Croats. Now that the Muslims have been drawn inexorably into the cataclysm, it is vital that outsiders understand their predicament. It is all too simple to attribute the disturbances to so-called Muslim fundamentalism. If the Serbs were to be believed—and experience has taught outsiders to take most of their allegations with a pinch of salt—the Balkan Orthodox nations (Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians, and Greeks) are being threatened by a resurgence of militant Islam. But the majority of Bosnian Muslims have been moderate, even irenic. Traditionally, they have been flexible pragmatists who, in contrast to Serbs and Croats, have preferred skillful bargaining and negotiations to brandishing a gun. In prewar Yugoslavia, they became masters of coalition politics. Doctor Alia Izetbegovic, Bosnia's first democratically elected president, is in this tradition. A Muslim and an academic, one of his chief concerns before the war was how Muslims should adapt to modern democratic European pluralist societies.

Tito (1892-1980), Yugoslavia's charismatic Communist leader, recognizing the necessity of counterbalancing escalating tensions between Serbs and Croats, created a Muslim power base in Bosnia. In 1970, he enhanced Muslim status by recognizing "Muslim" as a distinct nationality, Yugoslavia's third largest, and Muslims came to enjoy greater tolerance than in any other Communist state. They built as many mosques as there are Orthodox and Catholic churches. Sarajevo had the only Muslim theological faculty in Europe. Muslims also benefited from the contacts Tito built with Middle Eastern states. Despite this, state atheism and secularism reduced the proportion of practicing Muslims in Bosnia to below 40 percent.

The post-Tito decade was an uneasy one for Bosnian religious activists, Muslim and Christian alike. Its hard-line government overreacted and imprisoned, among others, Izetbegovic and Franciscans associated with Medjugorje. But with the fall of communism, religious freedom and access to the media were granted. In Bosnia, resurgent Islam is rapidly filling the vacuum left by communism. While enlightened Muslim leaders like the dynamic Hadj Jakub Selimowski and Bosnia's largest political party—the Muslim Party for Democratic Action—deny Serb allegations that they intend to undermine the secular state, five hundred of the country's three thousand imams have demanded the reintroduction of traditional Islamic codes regarding schools and the role of women. Although such developments scare the majority of Bosnia's Westernized Muslims, Islam could become a rallying force in a rapidly disintegrating society. A further sinister development is that houses of worship are now becoming targets for fire bombs, and militant Ustasas and Cetniks have resurfaced.

Muslims feel doubly vulnerable. Although they are in alliance with the Croats against the Serbs, they don't completely trust them. Their suspicions that Serb President Slobodan Milosevic and Croat President Franjo Tudjman want to carve up most of Bosnia between themselves may be well-founded. While international recognition of independent Bosnia may now preclude that radical eventuality, the ongoing civil war might wreck Bosnian hopes for a permanent multiethnic peace in Bosnia and throw its relatively defenseless Muslim rump into the arms of militant Islamic forces, within or without. JANICE BROUN

Janice Broun is Eastern Europe correspondent for News Network International.

REPORT FROM THE HIGHWAY

HE WHO RIDES A WILDCAT...

LIFE IS JERRYBUILT: ENJOY IT

It's hard to be taken seriously as an environmentalist when you drive a '69 Buick Wildcat. My wife's grandfather gave it to us for free, which is the first reason I could hardly say no, even though it's got a 450 V8 as big as a refrigerator and gets about six miles to a gallon, on level ground. When you accelerate you can actually see the needle of the fuel gauge go down. It used to be a luxury car—power steering, brakes, windows, seats, aerial—but it's dinged up in the back now because grandfather couldn't see very well in reverse, and the front hood, broad as a ship's prow, is rusting out from the rain. It's a dark, Republican blue with black vinyl top and interior, low-slung, limousine-long, faintly sinister.

I'm making do with it as long as I can, since we live out in the country now and can't afford another second car. The odometer reads only 99,357 miles. Fuzzy dice help me brazen out disapproving stares at stoplights.

I used to be so smug when we lived in town and I could walk everywhere, looking down on the commuters and the two-car families. I've not had to drive before in any place we've lived—can measure out my life by the different walks I've taken on the way to work, the neighborhoods I've memorized over the years, house by house, corner by corner. Walking instead of driving has always been a point of honor with me, until now.

I can maintain a little self-respect because I bike on alternate

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days, whenever the weather is decent and my legs are holding out. It's fifteen miles round trip, and hilly, just about the upper limit for me, sometimes past it. I love the riding on the good days, get all the expected benefits: the glow of endorphins, the frameless views of fields and trees. I can recover some of my former smugness. I'm self-sufficient again, under my own power, and not dependent on Gulf oil or polluting the air. It's a matter of personal economy, too, of course. Between the bike and the Buick, I get about twenty miles a gallon.

Choking on exhaust and catalytic converter fumes in the bike lanes, listening for the doppler effect of the next car, and the next, fighting occasional truck turbulence, I can nurse my hatred of the automobile. I keep thinking of the millions of cars and trucks on the roads today, the millions sold each year, the important percentage of the gross national product devoted to the making and selling of cars, the countless cubic tons of asphalt. I keep thinking of the endless chain of single drivers listening to Madonna and sucking up Big Gulps driving from mall to mall in search of the latest K-Mart Blue Light Special. The endless chain, each face blank. I keep wondering whether there's any place of human habitation in the world now out of earshot of the hurrying, elbowing, invasive, Chinese-water-torture whine and roar of arterial traffic, the incessant downshifting and revving up, the constant mental tailgating.

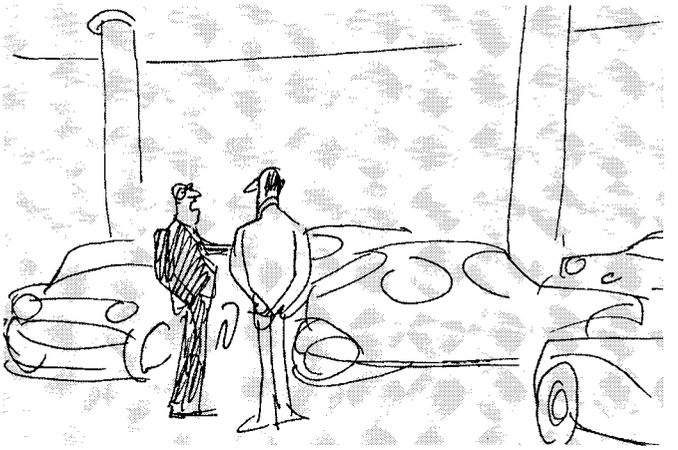
In the science fiction stories some cataclysm or economic collapse has emptied the suburbs. The roads are cracked and full of weeds, the yards growing wild. Things seem pleasantly pastoral to me. When the radioactive dust settles and people start back into their routines again, they look up from planting corn or drawing water and all they hear is the wind in the trees.

Oldtimers out where I live now remember when you could stop in the middle of Highland Drive and pick strawberries. The hump between the ruts was grassy and full of dandelions. It's not the wars these people remember when you ask them about the most important changes in their lives, it's the car. Cars have shrunk and hurried up the world, brought all the city people to the forest. People like me.

Being forced to drive the Buick on the alternate and rainy days has been another lesson in how I participate in my culture whether I want to or not. I have to give in more and more. It's tricky. There's a little justification for pride in making do and delaying the gratification of a sleeker, more efficient engine. But not much. I can't hold myself apart anymore. The ironic fact is that to move out and away from the malls and the Muzak I've had to commit myself to the highway.

It's tricky, too, because secretly I love driving the Buick. I love its cabin-cruiser glide, its liquid turns, the weight and buoyancy of the thing. Driving home I sometimes feel for a moment the way I imagine my father felt when he drove home in his Chevys or Dodges, confident behind the wheel, mature in power. It's a grown-up car, a Leave-It-to-Beaver-Hi-honey-I'm-home car.

I have a recurring dream, even now, of a huge white Ford Fairlane flying down a desert road. It's a square, futuristic car in the dream, straight and simple as a line drawing, and what I experience as I drive it or sit next to my father driving it (it



"Dave, refresh my memory. Which one is the economy model?"

varies) is the simple exhilaration of speed, of the things flying past. It's a dream without plot, just the feeling of exultation, of some deep pleasure in what I know is the infallibility and wonder of the engine beneath the hood, as if all the claims of the car commercials were actually true, as if the car really is magic, can change your life—power without cost.

Armstrong and Aldrin walked on the moon the year the Buick was made, an event I remember with absolute clarity. I was at scout camp then, gathered with the others around a black and white television hooked up to the outlet in the commissary, watching the stiff and ghostly figures from under the ponderosa. There was a full moon that week and I remember feeling nothing but joy in the fact of us *being* there, a joy mixed up I'm sure with the joy of being fourteen and surrounded by trees, paddling canoes, and diving off docks and cooking over a fire every night. For me the moon-shot involved imagination, not technology. I had no sense of the cost of that power, or of the disparity between that technological achievement and the war in Vietnam, the poverty at home.

There's another odd resonance, too, a private though similar irony, since the Buick always reminds me of the tree farm where my wife's grandparents lived for thirty years, harvesting and replanting the hemlock, living off the land. Interior smells—of the alder smoke that clung to the carpet and walls of their house—set off memory, as smells always do. I am digging postholes. I am stretching barbed wire. I am planting seedlings, cutting trail, wheelbarrowing silt from the drained ponds, hauling skyline over muddy hills, yarding alder for firewood, running a chain saw until my knuckles drag and my crotch burns. I am hiking the logged off hills, beautiful now in leaning alder, corridors of white trunks and shimmering leaves veiling the huge, old growth stumps, extending off in the distance toward the ITT-Rayoneer land that has spread and spread until it entirely surrounds this tiny three hundred acres.

Grandfather is dead of bone cancer now. Nana is stooped over, taking medicine for her heart. The last time they came to the new house they were too tired to appreciate my own line of tall trees, my own little acre and a half of forest. They smiled when I told them we bought the house because it reminded us of theirs, because we wanted to live something of the life they

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had lived, but they were too spent to do any more.

All these paradoxical associations. All these levels. The Buick is an example of how complex and patchwork and jerrybuilt life is. How you have to compromise and trade off. How you have to enjoy the ironies and messiness. How we are always taking losses. It's somehow representative of the balancing we've all had to do coming of age in the world of Nintendo and MTV that the moonshot foreshadowed and made possible.

It's connected with time, with history. We are living now, my generation, at the moment of transition. Perhaps right on the edge of one age and the beginning of another. I keep thinking of this as we approach the end of the century. Maybe the change will come slowly or without upheaval, but I'm sure that in any event it will come and that it will be profound. My kids love riding in the Buick, playing with the power windows. Maybe one day when we are gone and the next age has begun they'll be bending over on Highland Drive picking strawberries or having a picnic in the grass, and all around them will be the sound of the wind in the trees. And looking at their own children they'll suddenly think of riding in their father's Buick long ago and of another, more frantic time when the world was mostly asphalt and shopping malls and always in the air was the sound of acceleration, the shifting of gears. CHRIS ANDERSON

Chris Anderson teaches English at Oregon State University.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

THE CHARACTER ISSUE

BILL, FRANKLIN, & PERICLES

People polled on exit from voting places after the New York, Kansas, and Minnesota primaries were asked whether the candidates had "the honesty and integrity to serve effectively as president." It was a leading question obviously aimed at Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas who, in primary after primary, has been battered by questions about his private morality.

Now, as a Democrat and a voter, I have not as yet succumbed to Clinton's rather slippery charm nor do I have any clear idea of what his qualifications for the presidency may be. In part this is because, like any other voter, I have been deprived by the media of information about his stance on issues, his proposed program, and his vision for the country. But I do wonder what the existing voters who answered the honesty and integrity question in New York, where they were dubious, and in Kansas, where they were affirmative, really meant. How do you estimate the honesty and integrity needed to serve effectively as president? How is that honesty and integrity thought needed to be demonstrated in public life?

Having just finished reviewing the new biography of Eleanor Roosevelt by Blanche Wiesen Cook (*Eleanor Roosevelt*, Viking), I cannot help wondering how Franklin Roosevelt, surely one of our greatest presidents, would have survived the scrutiny to which Clinton has been subjected. Like Clinton, he had served in public office—first as a New York state senator, as Wilson's assistant secretary of the Navy, and then as governor—and had had his difficulties with the press of his own state.

There are other parallels. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's private life, we now know, was far from being above reproach. Even in the early years of his marriage he took to staying out till dawn drinking and playing poker. In Wilson's Washington he was considered "high-spirited, handsome, energetic, and dashing. Women flocked to him" (Cook). There were flirtations and eventually the marriage crisis over his affair with Lucy Mercer. In Roosevelt's time, however, the press did not concern itself with such private matters, and one can only imagine how the aristocratic but politically astute FDR would have handled any questioner with the temerity to ask about them.

Franklin Roosevelt's honesty in public matters also had its limitations. After World War I he boasted in a speech that, as assistant secretary of the Navy, he had "spent $40,000 for guns before Congress gave me or anyone permission to spend the money." According to Cook, "he boasted that he had 'committed enough illegal acts' to be impeached and jailed had he made 'wrong guesses.'" There is a foretaste here of the FDR who played a little fast and loose with Lend-Lease in order to aid Britain before we entered World War II; and some excuse for the malevolent accusations of the Roosevelt-haters who were to accuse him of precipitating Pearl Harbor by deliberately overlooking the imminent peril to the fleet there.

FDR's career was not distinguished by loyalty. He was guilty, for example, of making fun of and mimicking Josephus Daniels, the secretary of the Navy under whom he served, and of eventually supporting Daniels's severest critic in order to appear as always independent himself.

In addition we know now, too, that FDR's commitment to social justice was a slowly evolving commitment and, in many cases, a commitment to which he was led by his much more idealistic wife. In the Albany years, FDR was not much interested in issues of reform. He took no part in supporting the commission appointed to investigate the working conditions that resulted in the Triangle Company Factory fire that resulted in the death of 147 women. Yet he was, years later, to claim credit for the legislatively imposed fifty-four-hour work week for women and children and for thirty-two other labor reform acts passed because of the commission's work. He did nothing to halt the military's mob-like abuse of blacks in the race riots of 1919. And, as Cox's vice-presidential candidate in 1920, he rejected immigrant voters saying "we want all-American voters only," and hailed as "martyrs" the dead of the Centralia, Pennsylvania, American Legion—the very

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legionnaires who had attacked members of the IWW there, initiated a gun battle, and had gone so far as to lynch one IWW leader.

Given so much that might have been turned up from his past, would a Franklin Delano Roosevelt have made it through today's primary season? We certainly have reason to doubt it.

Despite all this, this same Franklin Roosevelt rallied a nation from despair in the Great Depression and rescued a generation from poverty, hunger, and lack of opportunity by a brilliant series of executive acts and the promotion of legislative reforms. The same skills that made him resort to political subterfuge in the past made him the very leader the nation needed in its time of crisis.

Do I suggest, then, that moral defects are qualifications for leadership? Of course not, but I do say that other qualifications may compensate for and even override these defects. The ability to lead is one of them. The personal magnetism that attracts other competent men and women is another. The ability to draw people with varying interests together is still another. Roosevelt had these qualities. It remains to be seen whether Clinton has, although the praise of his fellow governors seems to suggest the possibility.

Perhaps Rhodes scholar Clinton might be well advised to take another look at Pericles, the Athenian ruler to whom FDR has been compared. Plutarch depicts him as a leader who had "an elevation of purpose and dignity of language raised far above the base and dishonest buffooneries of mob-eloquence." Pericles's forthright method of handling slanders and personal attacks could also be instructive. Above all, after the conflicts of the primaries, Clinton might be persuaded to emulate that Pericles who "had never gratified his envy or his passion, nor ever had treated any enemy as irreconcilably opposed to him." □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

BLAME THE MESSAGE

IT COMES FROM ELITISTS

Bill Clinton, it appears, is on his way to becoming the Democratic nominee for president, and all around the nation the Democratic party is wondering out loud once again if it has chosen the wrong candidate.

For you see, that's the preferred Democratic way of explaining why they have been able to win the White House only once since 1968 (out of six elections): "We ran the wrong candidate." Thus Dukakis was wrong in 1988, Mondale was wrong in 1984, Carter was wrong in 1980 (though he was somehow right in 1976, but that was a fluke), McGovern was wrong in 1972, and Humphrey was wrong in 1968.

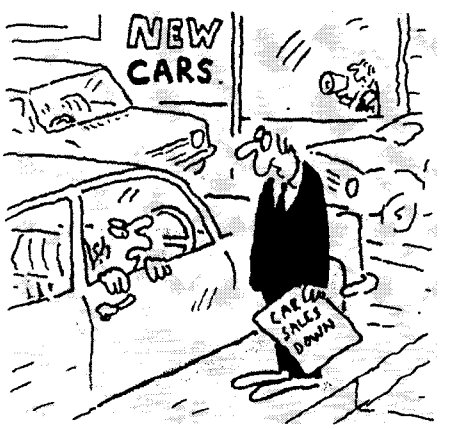
This Democratic explanation is generous enough to give a kind of backhanded credit to the winning Republican candidates. The orthodox creed runs something like this: Nixon was tricky and his nasty cleverness fooled the people, especially in 1972, when he won every state but Massachusetts. Ronald Reagan, a harmless old geezer endlessly manipulated by his wife and other handlers, also fooled the people (after first of all fooling himself); he had us convinced that he possessed a magic formula for leading us into a land of milk and honey without the bother of traveling through the desert. And of course, George Bush—a man who, like Gertrude Stein's Oakland, has no "there" there—also fooled the people, causing them to believe that Bush-Quayle was the only team that could save America from a Dukakis-Horton administration rife with prison furloughs and nonsalutes to the flag.

It is an article of faith in the Democratic religion that presidential election defeats are to be explained entirely in terms of candidates and campaign strategies, never in terms of the message delivered by candidate or party.

It is nearly two centuries now since the invention of modern historiography and social science, when historians abandoned the old "kings and battles" mode of writing history and began instead to examine the broader and deeper forces that shape the social world. Well, word of this scholarly revolution has apparently not reached Democratic party pundits. Good liberal Democrats, who, while often not churchgoing people themselves, are sufficiently concerned about religion to deplore biblical fundamentalism when practiced by Southern Baptists, practice social science fundamentalism when it comes to analyzing presidential election results.

Why is this? Why do apparently intelligent people fall into such stupidity at precisely this point?

One reason is that there has been a general decline in intellectualism in the Democratic party. Time was when the Republicans were the "stupid party" (to use the phrase that John Stuart Mill applied to the British Conservative party of his day) and the Democrats the party of intelligence. But that day has long since passed. Republican intellectuals, once an endangered species, now abound, while the Democrats at the national level have come to be dominated by a social stratum that has a hard time distinguishing between catch-phrases and ideas.



"To be honest, I only dodged in here to avoid a candidate."

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In the good old days the Democrats used to be characterized by a strange but effective marriage between the politicians and the intellectuals: Jim Farley and Rexford Tugwell, or Mayor Daley and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The social-cultural gap between the two was sufficiently great that there was no danger of anyone confusing one with the other. The politicians didn't pretend to be intellectuals, and the intellectuals didn't pretend to be politicians. The politicians supplied the votes, the intellectuals the ideas.

But somewhere along the way an intermediate stratum developed and came to have great influence in the party.

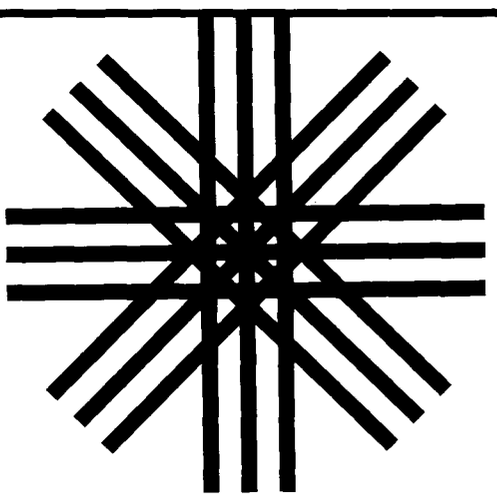
The members of this new political class were part-politician and part-intellectual. That is to say, they were politicians who had been to college (often very good colleges) and beyond. They had pretentions to intellectual culture. When it came to ideas, they didn't defer to the intellectuals, for they considered themselves to be relatively competent in the realms of abstract ideas and far more competent than the professional intellectuals in the realm of applied ideas. And when it came to politics, they certainly did not defer to politicians of the traditional type, whom they considered to be their social inferiors.

The truth is, of course, that this new stratum, despite its good opinion of itself, was not especially competent in the field of ideas. A kind of Gresham's Law of the intellectual life came into play: bad ideas drove out good. Third-rate minds drove out first-rate minds, and slogans of bumper-sticker quality came to replace serious analysis. The simplistic mentality which reduces the abortion question to "a woman's right to choose" is the same mentality that reduces the analysis of presidential defeats to "we ran the wrong candidate."

There is yet another reason this new political class fails to offer anything but the most superficial analysis of the reasons for Democratic presidential defeats: a more profound analysis might point the finger of blame at this class itself. One of the reasons traditional Democratic constituencies—white Southerners and Catholic ethnics outside the South—have drifted away from the Democrats in recent decades is the sense these groups have that the national Democratic party has fallen into the hands of a culturally alien group.

To be sure, there are other reasons for this drift: a certain amount of racism in the South, a considerable amount of upward mobility among Catholics. But there is no denying that the new political class is different in such a way as to give offense. The old groups are working class and lower-middle class; the new is upper-middle. The old groups are churchgoing, the new thoroughly secularized. The old have a strong sense of community; the new is highly individualistic. The old tend to moral absolutism, the new to moral relativism. The old are usually locals rooted in a place; the new class is largely made up of rootless cosmopolitans.

In short, the traditional Democratic constituencies sense that control of the national Democratic party is in the hands of people whose values are alien to the values of those traditional groups. Little wonder the Democrats cannot elect a president. And little wonder the new political class shies away from an examination of the real causes of this inability. □



THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE

The Friars of the Atonement announce the third annual Graymoor Prize, to be awarded to the best essay on any aspect of ecumenical or interreligious affairs. The prize is intended to encourage and support new ecumenical and interreligious ideas and perspectives. The award-winning submission, which may take the form of a scholarly or critical essay or a personal narrative, should appeal to the interests of the general educated reader.

Original and unpublished essays of approximately 2,500-4,000 words should be submitted to the editors of COMMONWEAL who will make the final decision following consultation with a panel of experts. The winning essay will receive a prize of $1,000 and will be published in COMMONWEAL. The editors reserve the right not to award the prize.

Deadline: October 1, 1992. Announcement of Prize: December 18, 1992. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 15, 1993, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

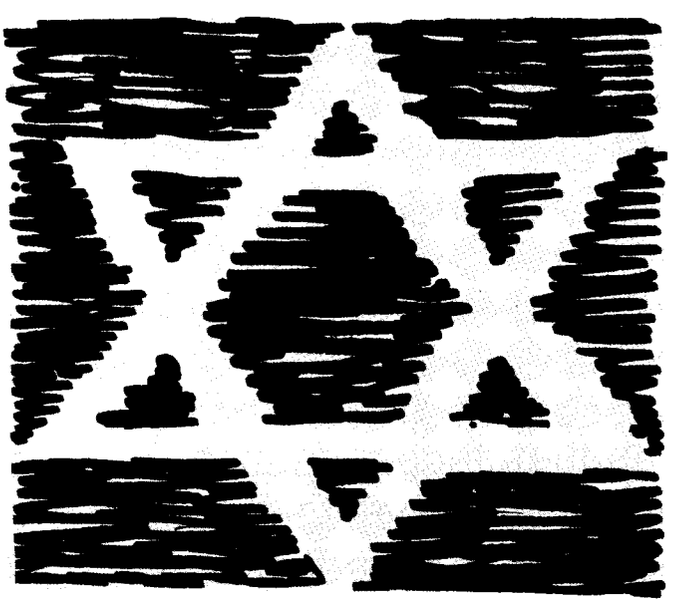
LIVING WITH JUDAISM'S MILLENNIAL EXPECTATIONS

The most powerful of all biblical visions is the dream of the end of days. The Messiah will come. All wrongs will be righted. Human life will henceforth be lived in bliss in the sight of the Lord. The specific woe of the Jews, their exile from the land that God gave them, will come to an end.

Through the centuries this dream has provided hope, but it has also been the source of disaster. The greatest danger of all has been to imagine, in critical times, that messianic days are at hand, and that men can therefore act as if they know what time it is on God's clock. The "armed zealots" who revolted against Rome in the year 66 were certain that the "end of days" was near. Most of the rabbis of that day were opposed to revolt. They did not believe that anyone could know the will of God; pretending to know the date of the coming of the Messiah was a dangerous, and even heretical, exercise. The rabbis have never abandoned the dream of the Messiah but, through the centuries, they have kept insisting the Jews dare not ever bet their lives, in war or politics, on the hope that he would appear, now, to save them. A fundamental, and continuing, tension exists in Jewish history between those who pant for the Messiah and plunge into danger to "force him to appear," and those who wait and act in this world with tact and pragmatism.

This tension exists not only within the religious tradition; it cuts across the secular ideologies that many Jews have adopted in recent times. In the modern era, the most contemporary minds among Jews in the nineteenth century were eager believers in the inevitability of progress. The Enlightenment in the eighteenth century offered the dream of a heaven on earth, if only men and women would free themselves of the chains of the existing society. Many responded to this vision by being willing to assimilate, to abandon their Jewish separateness so that they might fit into a new society. Karl Marx translated the dream of the Enlightenment into economic terms: a society of equal individuals could be created, but only in a world order that had abolished class distinctions. All the hatreds that came from economic inequities would be gone. Marx was certain that a classless society was inevitable, for the dialectic of history would produce it. This assurance of a new heaven on earth enticed many Jews, because, as Marx himself had insisted in 1843 in an early essay "On the Jewish Question," anti-Semitism would disappear if its economic roots in class struggle were cut.

As I have noted elsewhere, the certainty of progress was challenged among Jews by the persistence of anti-Semitism. Several central figures of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire, had regarded the Jews as very nearly hopeless, as incapable of "regeneration." During the French Revolution, some Jacobin radicals wanted to exclude Jews from the new order of equality. A generation later, the socialist Pierre Joseph Proudhon regarded Jews as the archcapitalists who needed to be destroyed; they could not be transformed even by a new socialist society. More painful than these theories was the continuing reality of anti-Semitism. One could explain away its continued virulence in benighted Tsarist Russia, but not the renewed strength of this disease in the 1890s in centers of advanced culture such as Vienna, where Wilhelm Marr was elected mayor on an anti-Jewish platform,



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and in Paris, where Captain Alfred Dreyfus was judged to be a traitor on fabricated evidence because he was a Jew. By the end of the nineteenth century many people, and especially Jews, found it harder to believe that the day of a just and peaceful society was near. Even if the non-Jewish majorities were to sort out their problems and move into a golden dawn, some feared that the Jews were likely to be left behind.

At this bleak moment Theodor Herzl reinvented Zionism as utopia, as a messianic movement. He asserted that heaven on earth for Jews could be achieved, and was indeed inevitable, through political Zionism. The unique power of Theodor Herzl's pamphlet, *The Jewish State* (1896), was not in any appeal to Jewish national emotions, for he himself was so totally estranged from the inherited practices of Jews that he did not even circumcise his children. There was almost nothing in Herzl's original vision of restoring ancient Jewish glories in the Holy Land, for he was willing to consider a Jewish state in empty land in Argentina, if that were more easily available. Herzl's vision of the culture that would prevail in the future Jewish state was nebulous; he seemed to have imagined some version of Vienna or Paris, without anti-Semites to trouble the Jews. Nonetheless, this Jewish "goy" almost instantly became the leader of the Zionists, most of whom were deeply rooted in Jewish culture and history.

Herzl offered them something more than an imposing presence and a gift for staging diplomatic theater. He suggested a solution to the "Jewish problem": Jews should choose between living in a state of their own or total assimilation everywhere else; thus the situation of the Jewish people would be "normalized." By creating a state, and making such choice possible, the "Jewish problem," the anomaly of Jewish existence everywhere as an embattled minority, would be brought to an end, once and for all.

The state of Israel did not arise according to Herzl's blueprint. Even in his lifetime the Zionist movement refused to follow his detachment from Jewish culture. But Herzl's Zionist vision has remained dominant, to this day. The Jewish state thinks of itself not just as a refuge for Jews in trouble, or as a place in which Judaism can define itself in a home of its own, but as the climactic achievement of Jewish history. The Zionist movement continues to insist, in its official platform, that Jews who dwell outside the state of Israel are in a "state of sin," because they are obstructing the normalization of the Jewish people. The leaders of Israel, almost without exception, from right to left, have no doubt that Israel's purposes must predominate in setting the agenda in the Jewish world, and not simply because the state is embattled. The deepest undercurrent is the conviction that the Zionist state is the transforming event of Jewish history and that it is, at the very least, a preamble to the end of days, in this world.

But even within Zionism itself, a countertradition has existed. Ahad Ha'am, the central figure of cultural Zionism, did not believe that the Messiah, in either secular or religious garb, was around the corner. The problems of the Jewish people would remain, for no resolution of the tensions between Jews and the world could be found through progress, or socialism, or nationalism. A homeland was necessary, so that Jews could reinvigorate their spiritual energies in a place where they would, at last, be the majority culture. Ahad Ha'am's Zionism was thus a holding operation; he was devising a new tool through which the Jewish people could maintain its morale, while continuing to make again the myriad of pragmatic accommodations through which the Jews had survived the centuries of their exile. In this attitude Ahad Ha'am was followed by Martin Buber and Judah Leon Magnes and, more recently, by Gershom Scholem and Isaiah Leibovits. Their hopes for the Zionist state have ranged from casting it as a place of refuge to hoping that it would be a model community for all the world, but all these thinkers, and many more besides, have agreed on a fundamental premise: to concentrate part of the Jewish people into a nation of its own is necessary, for Jews need some national power in their own hands, but achieving the Zionist state does not represent the ultimate redemption of the Jews. The business of the Jewish people as a whole, and especially of that part that has settled in the state, is to be conducted prudently, and without grandiose pretensions.

Messianic believers and pragmatists have also been quarreling about religion. Some elements within the Orthodox community insist that the Messiah is near at hand. The Temple is about to be restored, and the Holy Land, in Jewish hands, will be the permanent spiritual center for all humanity. In the name of this certainty, not one inch of the soil of the land of Israel can be surrendered, even if political reasons are advanced, for such action would betray God's will. This Orthodox religious messianism has gone to war not only over "foreign policy"; these believers have also broken the tissue of pragmatic accommodations among the factions within the Jewish community. The very idea that Jews have become a plural people which harbors many versions of belief, or disbelief, has been dismissed as concession to heresy. The arrangements that make it possible for these disparate groups to exist together as Jews are not to be fostered, repaired, or renegotiated; they are simply to be swept away.

Both secular and religious messianists have been self-centered. The ultra-Orthodox regard other Jews as a disturbing periphery. Their senses of hurt, if such there be, are irrelevant to those who regard themselves as the true bearers of Judaism. The ultranationalists, whether secular or religious, look at the world of the non-Jews as a source of help to be used, or of obstruction to be removed. The moderates have opposed such self-centeredness in all its forms. They have worked for peace within the Jewish community; they have insisted on justice and equality in the behavior of Jews toward Arabs. The moderates remain convinced that ethnocentrism and self-righteousness are self-defeating. They are sure that, though ultra-Orthodoxy has recently been creating turmoil within the Jewish community, it cannot win unless the Messiah really appears on the side of these believers. The moderates point out that ultranationalism has embittered the Arabs, but cannot cow them into submission. It cannot win a permanent victory unless the war of Gog and Magog soon commences, and the Messiah,

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with sword, subdues the Arabs.

I do not belong to the messianic believers. I do not believe that the Jews will soon become a "normal people" by being gathered into Zion. On the contrary, the state of Israel is profoundly important because it has added contemporary energy to the Jewishness of all Jews, wherever they might continue to live. I am even less persuaded that the Messiah of religious belief will soon appear. I continue to ask the nagging question: if he did not appear at Auschwitz, why is he more likely to come to earth to save the West Bank for Jewish sovereignty?

The Jewish people cannot survive among the nations in an attitude of defiance. What echoes within me is an attitude that was once defined in the Talmud: if you are planting a sapling and hear that the Messiah is coming, finish the planting before you leave to look for him. And I continue to remember a more pointed remark by one of the rabbis in the Talmud: if the Messiah will appear only amidst suffering and injustice, let him come but I will not receive him. We are commanded to cultivate decency in a world that only God can redeem, in his own time. This faith is the true utopian vision of the Jews. □

A WOUNDED CHURCH

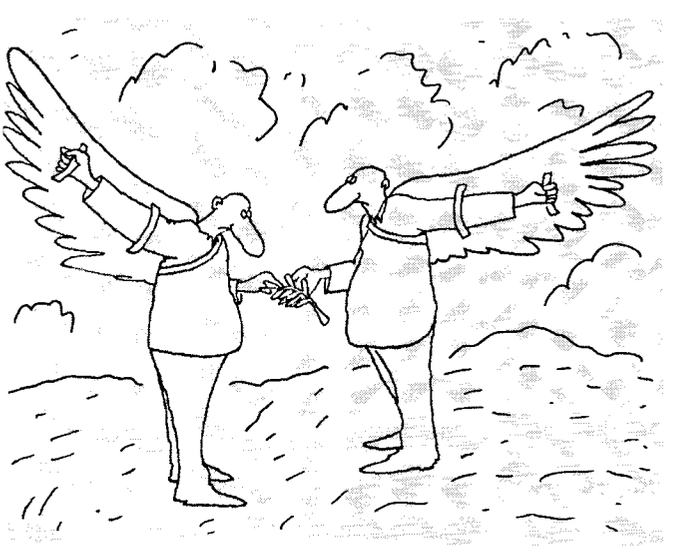
TOWARD RECONCILIATION IN EL SALVADOR

RICHARD A. HOWARD

On February 1, 1992, a cease-fire began that brought a formal end to twelve years of civil war in El Salvador. It was a day many Salvadorans thought they would never live to see, and 75,000 men, women, and children did not. Symbolizing this new moment in the country's history, a national "Commission for the Consolidation of the Peace" (COPAZ) was inaugurated at 9:00 A.M. in an auditorium in the capital of San Salvador. COPAZ is made up of a member from each political party represented in the National Assembly, as well as representatives from the Salvadoran government and the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front (FMLN). The commission is charged with monitoring and implementing the political, economic, military, police, judicial, and electoral reforms negotiated in the peace accords.

Given the history of the last decade, what took place that Saturday morning was quite remarkable. When President Alfredo Cristiani walked into the auditorium, surrounded by his bodyguards and members of the ARENA government, there was some applause from the three thousand people in attendance. But the entrance of Joaquin Villalobos, one of the five principal commanders of the FMLN, was greeted with cheers, sustained applause, and shouts of, "Joaquin! Joaquin!" Villalobos then took his seat at the table directly to the left of Colonel Juan Orlando Zepeda, a high-ranking officer who has been implicated by Congressman Joe Moakley (D-Mass.) as one of the "intellectual authors" of the November 1989 assassination of six Jesuits and two women. Even those who hoped for the end of the war probably never thought they would see these two men sitting together.

Seated in the front of the hall were Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, who holds observer status on COPAZ, and Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez, the auxiliary of San Salvador. Rivera, who was named archbishop after the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, had worked tirelessly to promote a negotiated settlement to the conflict. He and Rosa Chavez had played important roles during the war, from denouncing human rights violations in their Sunday homilies to mediating the periodic attempts at negotiating a settlement. The two were often the only voices in the Catholic hierarchy who spoke out (along with Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez) against the repression and injustice that have flourished for decades. Rivera y Damas's recent election as head of the Salvadoran Bishops' Conference (CEDES) was welcome news precisely for this reason.



RICHARD A. HOWARD, S.J., *lives and works in El Salvador.*

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Quietly sitting in the middle of the auditorium, unnoticed by all but a few, was a tall, blonde man with a sunburned face, looking very uncomfortable in an ill-fitting suit. His presence surprised some who recognized him, but it was a pleasant surprise. On a day when a FMLN leader could sit down next to a Salvadoran colonel and both pledge to work for peace, it was at least as appropriate that the Reverend Rogelio Ponseele sat in the same auditorium to witness such an event. The presence of the Belgian priest reflected the unique manner in which the church had ministered throughout the war. For many people, Ponseele symbolized the way in which the official church *could* have ministered to people, especially during the war's darkest days.

For the last ten years, Ponseele lived and worked in the Department of Morazán in northeastern El Salvador. He was forced to flee there after having worked during the 1970s with Christian base communities in San Salvador. One of his co-workers, the Reverend Octavio Ortiz, and four young boys were killed by the National Guard on January 20, 1979, while on a retreat. After receiving death threats and having his parish house bombed, Ponseele could no longer work in the capital. Since that time he has served thirty thousand people in northern Morazán, usually with the help of one other priest and the lay pastoral team that he helped to form. During the last two years, the Reverend Esteban Velazquez has been working with him as well.

Ponseele's pastoral presence and work in Morazán has been "unofficial." The bishop of San Miguel, Eduardo Alvarez, not only refused to accept the priest's offer to work in the diocese, but never once visited the area during the twelve-year war. Even the papal nuncio, who has been in El Salvador only a little over a year, has visited on two occasions and spoken to Ponseele and the pastoral workers in the area. Bishop Alvarez, a former vicar to the Armed Forces, apparently has considered all the people in that zone guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers and thus undeserving of pastoral attention. He has refused to recognize, for example, the existence of Ciudad Segundo Montes, a settlement of eighty-five hundred returned Salvadoran refugees named after one of the Jesuits killed by the Salvadoran military. The refugees returned to their homeland in early 1990 after ten years in a Honduran refugee camp. Dennis Leder, a Jesuit priest who had worked with the refugees for five years, was also denied permission by Bishop Alvarez to work in the diocese.

Whatever the bishop's reasons may be, there has been no pastoral attention from the diocese in that entire zone for the last ten years. It was the work of Rogelio Ponseele and the Christian base communities of El Salvador (CEBES) that helped to keep the people's faith alive. Their work and that of others deeply committed to the poor, because it had no "official church" sanction, has occasionally come under fire from both political and ecclesiastical corners. Jon Sobrino, S.J., writes, "They have been branded as the 'popular church' or the 'parallel church,' with the implication that their commitment is more Marxist than Christian and their loyalties more to revolution than to the church. They are therefore rejected by the episcopal conference and accepted or tolerated with varying degrees of tension by the Archdiocese of San Salvador" (see *A Decade of War*, Anjali Sundaram and George Gelber, eds., Monthly Review Press).

Their situation has not been improved by articles such as "The Cross and the Gun" by Kenneth Freed in the *Los Angeles Times* (October 9, 1990). With a dateline from the small town of Perquin, Freed wrote that "for Fathers Rogelio Ponseele and Esteban Velazquez, the kingdom of heaven is found in this war-battered village in northeastern El Salvador. Their beliefs are in God and armed revolution." Freed had spent all of twenty-five minutes talking with the two priests. He misconstrued their views on violence, and he made no effort to find out what life had been like for them and the people with whom they lived and worked under extraordinarily difficult conditions during all those years. Yet his report was widely circulated.

What kind of faith does it take to preach a word of hope among people who have witnessed the destruction of an entire village of family members and friends? In an interview with a group of North Americans in September 1990, shortly before the tenth anniversary of the Mozote massacre, Ponseele reflected:

> I remember the period after the massacre in Mozote in December 1981, when the Army killed more than one thousand *campesinos*: men, women, and children. Do you know about that? Do you know how they gathered the men in the church and shot them? How they brought the women together, young and old, raped them and killed them? And the children, how they were shot and bayoneted to death? By killing the whole village, the Army tried to do away with the social base of the FMLN.
>
> In Mozote there had been families, small shops, a school. In short, there was genuine happiness. I celebrated Mass there many times and I remember how much the people participated. I knew many people from Mozote. When I preached there, I preached of hope. I told them we would have to pass through difficult times, but that we would win our freedom. As Christians we are not eternally condemned to a situation of misery and repression. But then, such a cruel massacre! I considered leaving the ministry. Instead of continuing as a priest, instead of trying to motivate the people, perhaps I could serve better in a more political setting. The people gave me strength. Family members of those who died at Mozote encouraged me to continue pastoral work. They told me that though God had been silent during the massacre, God was greater than [then-Salvadoran president] Duarte, that God was greater than Ronald Reagan, and that God has the last word ("I Only Wanted to Be a Good Priest," Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean, 1990).

What Ponseele describes sounds similar to what happened to Archbishop Oscar Romero when faced with the murders of Rutilio Grande, S.J., Octavio Ortiz, and other priests and pastoral workers of his archdiocese. It sounds like an experience of conversion, when one encounters the face of God in the faces of people who know firsthand what the words "passion" and "death" mean; the experience of people patiently instructing their pastors

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about what following Jesus implies.

To allow oneself to be touched by the poor involves taking a risk. Romero was willing to take such risks, but he saw himself as simply preaching the gospel, prepared to accept the consequences. He once said, "It would be sad if there were not priests among the victims in a country where such horrific murders are being committed. They are the testimony of a church which embodies the problems of the people."

There were tensions in the Salvadoran Bishops' Conference when Romero was archbishop, and they are present still. They perhaps reached their apex after the assassination of the Jesuits in late 1989. During the two months following the killings, some of the bishops continued to believe, and even insisted publicly, that the murders had been carried out by the FMLN—a claim that Archbishop Rivera y Damas never believed. It was not until President Cristiani appeared on television in January 1990, announcing the involvement of the military in the killings, that the other bishops finally began to modify their positions.

The operative word in El Salvador currently, at least in political circles, is "reconciliation." No one believes that bringing a country together after twelve years of civil war will be easy and no one knows what it will entail. The peace accords and ceasefire will be difficult to implement, and people and parties are already gearing up for the 1994 elections. There is general agreement that all must work together and that reigniting the war will not bring the needed social, political, and judicial reforms. A similar commitment to dialogue and reconciliation needs to take hold within certain church circles as well. Now that the war is over, many of those lay and religious church workers who have been ministering in some of the most dangerous areas of the country without assistance, protection, or approval from the local bishop wish to "regularize" their status. They wish to have their pastoral ministry, and the struggles which the people have endured, recognized for what they have produced: vibrant small communities of faith and hope. Many of the catechists, delegates of the Word, and people they served are unwilling to settle for a resumption of ecclesiastical business as usual. They want consultation and dialogue about the appointment of pastors in parishes where they have been working—parishes that had been abandoned by some dioceses for years. They hope and expect that pastoral workers trained by people such as Ponseele will be able to continue their ministry, and that that their ministry will be incorporated and welcomed into the overall work of the diocese.

In his September 1990 interview, Ponseele described how that "unofficial" pastoral work had been organized in northern Morazán:

> Thirty thousand people live here north of the Torola River. There are just two priests. A pastoral team of eight lay people has taken on most of the responsibility for ministry. Our job is to support them, to visit the communities, and to develop materials for reflections and other activities. In each community there are local pastoral teams who are responsible for celebrations of the Word, catechism, and religious education....With all of these activities, we believe we are building a church of the poor, a church incarnated in the world of the poor. As a church we are in solidarity with the legitimate aspirations of the people. There is an ideal of the church of the poor to which we aspire.

The problem is that this ideal, a church incarnated in the world, a church that speaks to the heart and accompanies people directly in their struggles and aspirations—this ideal still rings of "communism" to many people. Bishop Alvarez of San Miguel consistently has refused to meet with Ponseele to discuss the priest's future status, and recently gave a pastoral team only five minutes of his time once he found out that they were returned refugees. There is also fear that the bishop will soon reassign a priest to the area who earlier had been pressured to leave for pointing out "suspicious people" to the Salvadoran army. These people later turned up dead.

"Reconciliation" is a word that is central to the Christian faith—we profess it as a sacrament. It is an act, a process that we consider holy and necessary for salvation. All of us are sinners, all need to be reconciled with God and one another. A long and difficult process of dialogue and negotiation has led to the beginning of what may evolve into a nationwide experience of reconciliation in El Salvador. It is clear that this next stage will be slow and painful. There have already been major disagreements among the COPAZ members concerning land tenure, especially in areas formerly controlled by the FMLN. There are other serious concerns regarding the process and timetable for dissolving the state security forces.

"Reconciliation" also implies an acknowledgment of past error and the necessity for healing. It was notable that of all the speakers at the COPAZ inauguration, only FMLN leader Villalobos made a public reference to past mistakes. Speaking of FMLN actions during the course of the conflict, he said, "We are very aware that we have committed errors, that we were not infallible, and that this is the moment to say this to the nation. It is not important to us whether the errors which others have made were greater or less than ours, or if those errors will be admitted some day. We are convinced that without truth and without justice there will neither be reconciliation nor peace."

This admission stood out all the more starkly when Armando Calderon Sol, president of the governing ARENA party and present mayor of San Salvador, offered his remarks. Not only did Calderon Sol make no mention of governmental or military errors (not even the killing of the Jesuits and the two women, when for the first time in Salvadoran history military officers had been convicted of a human rights violation), but he paid homage to the late Roberto D'Aubuisson, the founder of the ARENA party who has been linked to the formation and direction of El Salvador's infamous death squads.

The church will continue to play an important part in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. When asked about that in a recent interview, Archbishop Rivera said,

> Our most important role is promoting reconciliation among our people, convincing both rich and poor that all Salvadorans are brothers and sisters....In addition, the

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church has a role to play in the socioeconomic area, not with specific plans—that is not our job—but indirectly, by analyzing proposed solutions, insisting that they be as just as possible and that people, especially the poor, have a voice in decisions that affect their lives (*Maryknoll*, April 1992).

While the church must continue to do all it can to promote reconciliation within society, it will have to come to grips with its own need for reconciliation. Strong differences still divide the bishops and these differences need to be addressed. The "intra-ecclesiastical dialogue" which Archbishop Romero began years ago must resume with a new spirit. □

THE THREAT OF PEACE

CAN WE TURN SUBS INTO PLOUGHSHARES?

MURRAY POLNER

There is a specter haunting the American economy and it's called peace. In Groton, Connecticut, production of the Navy's Seawolf submarine will probably be canceled, and its maker, General Dynamics' Electric Boat, is beginning to lay off workers there and in Rhode Island. United Technologies' Sikorsky Helicopter division in Stratford, Connecticut, will have its Comanche Helicopter contract terminated before too long and predictions are that UT will soon begin massive cuts in its workforce.

In Southern California, where prosperity was fueled for decades by weapons manufacturing, Douglas Aircraft announced in January that 3,000 more people would be fired, bringing the total number of jobs lost since July 1990 to 15,000 in Long Beach and Torrance. This is a harbinger of many more thousands of pink slips to come in the area as pressures mount to slash the Pentagon's budget over the next five years and because President Bush's budget message recommended that production be suspended on Northrop's Stealth bomber, manufactured in Palmdale and Pico Rivera, California.

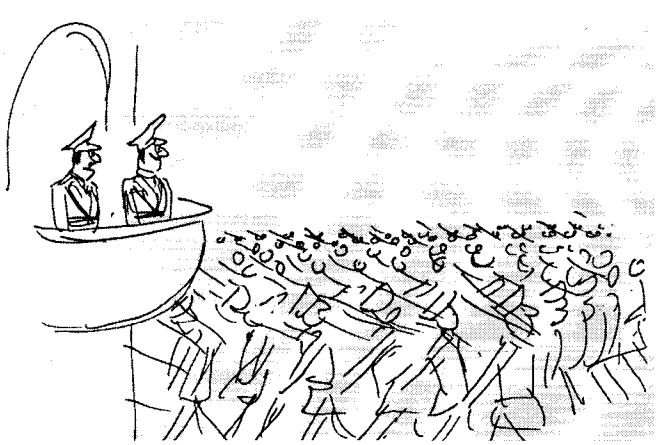
The ripples spread. "Our aerospace business is going down the hill. Thousands of people, and it's not just them. It's all the businesses in Long Beach," said a tavern employee in that coastal city, long heavily dependent on federal expenditures.

The national outlook for defense workers and those who depend on them is just as grim. A private research group, the Defense Budget Project, estimates that by 1996, and perhaps well before that, Alaska, California,Connecticut, and Hawaii, along with Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia (with their huge Pentagon civilian and military workforce) will feel the shock wave the most. Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) thinks that by 1996 the number of defense-related jobs lost could go as high as 2 million.

For defense contractors, the end of the cold war will in time bring an end to a system under which, operating with almost no market competition, with guaranteed profits and little concern for cost-containment, manufacturing products with little or no economic utility that have seldom been put to use, they earned fabulous sums—and created a million jobs.

Apart from weapons plants, there are lots more layoffs ahead: Many more military bases and airfields will be shut down over the next five or six years, and communities conditioned to living off military paychecks may find themselves in trouble. A half-million will be discharged from the military by 1996, including many blacks and members of other minority groups who view military service as a source of stable employment and secure futures.

In these circumstances some contend that the federal government has an obligation to assist these corporations, their employees, the towns losing nearby bases, and the coming generation of involuntary military veterans as part of the price of converting to a more peaceful world. But for this and other administrations, to speak of active federal intervention to help businesses, towns, and workers make the transition—or horror of horrors, veer off into new national priorities designed to reinvigorate the economy—has been anathema; it smacks of the



"We're at peace. What say we sell the whole kit and caboodle."

MURRAY POLNER, *former editor of* Present Tense, *writes frequently on economic and political affairs.*

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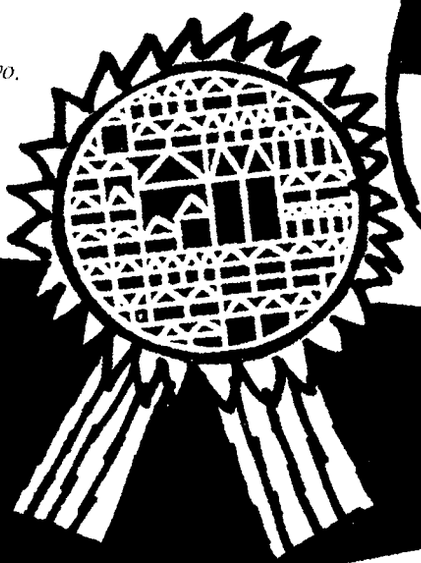

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dreaded "industrial policy," with the government picking winners and losers—even though that is precisely what government has done and still does on a massive scale in military contracting. Given this resistance, it may be preferable to stress the nation's own needs rather than its duty to help beleaguered communities and companies. For if no workable national response is forthcoming, the consequence of discarding so many Americans could prove to be continued economic decline and social dynamite over the next decade.

President George Bush appeared to show some understanding of this when someone asked him during the New Hampshire primary race what he was doing to help retrain middle-aged defense employees. His reply: "I have no easy answer to it, frankly, for a guy this far along in his career. It's not an easy question, and it's a heartbreaking one, too. But we've got to cope with it."

But how? At the governors' conference last February, Bush angrily responded to Colorado Governor Roy Romer's public criticism that his proposed $43 billion defense cut over the next five years was far too small: "What bases do you want to close? What areas do you want to shut down? What weapons systems do you want to knock off right now? Or do you want to lay off the people?" Hard questions. Romer might have put a query of his own—"Are we going to keep making tanks and bombs and ships just to keep people working?—as though they were Tinkertoys?"—and followed up the question with a conversion plan of his own. He didn't. In his Connecticut primary campaign Bill Clinton gave a dubious answer to Bush's question when he proposed building at least one more submarine to keep the Seawolf shipyard going. During the New York primary his wife Hillary Clinton said a Clinton administration would initiate planning and research to promote conversion. Generally, however, no presidential candidate of either party has offered a substantial program for such conversion.

The same is true, by and large, for Congress. Apart from a handful—Les Aspin (D-Wis.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Representative Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.) spring to mind—not much attention has been paid. Aspin, who has taken the lead on this issue, has urged that some defense production lines be maintained, though at reduced levels, to allow the improvement of a few existing weapons and thereby keep some skilled workers on the job. He has also suggested slashing the defense budget $91 billion over five years, with even greater cuts possible if the world remains relatively calm. But he knows the political obstacles. The real division in Congress on this issue, he says, is no longer hawk vs. dove, or even party rivalry, "but between those who have military facilities and plants in their districts and those who don't. The first group wants to keep what they have, and the others want to take the money and spend it on something else."

Congressman Weiss has addressed the transition problem more directly by introducing the Defense Economic Adjustment Act, which would provide means to help create "alternate use committees at large defense facilities," offer "adjustment assistance" for employees and communities while the transition from military to civilian production is underway, and thus ease the pressure on politicians to rescue weapons' manufacturers in their districts.

There are precedents for corrective governmental action at all levels, instances where careful planning has resurrected communities after military bases have been shut down. When, for instance, W. H. Tremayne was appointed in 1982 to work on the Defense Department's component of the Grace Commission study on waste in government, he believed "much was to be gained by communities through planned reuse of old bases." At a recent Conference on Base Closures, sponsored by Business Executives for National Security (BENS), Tremayne offered an example: Camp Kilmer in Piscataway, New Jersey, abandoned in 1960, today accommodates a busy industrial park and part of Rutgers University. The adjoining former Raritan Arsenal now comprises offices, warehouses, and Middlesex County College. The owners of the bowling alleys and bars servicing off-duty soldiers, says Tremayne, "thought their world had ended. Gone with the troops. But they were wrong."

Working out of an obscure office in the Pentagon, Robert M. Rauner, who directs the Office of Economic Adjustment (and whom Tremayne credits with first promoting the notion of "planned re-use") points out that planning for the great changes ahead is crucial. It must involve local groups "articulating community goals" and developing workable strategies, in his view. He contends that a large percentage of the communities that have lost their bases "have replaced lost civilian jobs and incomes within several years. Then [at least pre-recession] they go beyond those recovery levels to attain even larger, more diversified economies"—from pizza parlors, to colleges, to airports, to high-tech firms and retailers—proof that it can be done.

Ideas on how to do more are not lacking. Jobs With Peace, an advocacy group, produces research showing how new jobs in, say, home construction have a multiple job-creating impact

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in such fields as wood production, fabricated metal, plastics, cement, home appliances, and furniture. In the Twin Cities, where Unisys laid off several thousand workers because of reduced Pentagon spending, Local 2047 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has teamed up with Jobs With Peace to encourage Unisys to diversify into commercial production of such products as high-speed rails and smart irrigation systems.

Despite some success stories, however, many observers of the conversion process believe that most defense companies lack the flexibility, skills, and perhaps even the will to make a turnaround and compete in the private sector. At a BENS seminar in late 1990, Robert Gorman of AMI Research, which makes antisubmarine technology for the Navy, warned: "Our technology really isn't transferable to other markets." Yet another cautionary note was sounded by G. Ronald Hertenstein of Forecast International, a defense and aerospace analyst: Defense businesses have a "culture" grounded on having the government as its sole client. "Diversifying," he said, "is easier said than done." An analyst who spoke with me on condition of anonymity described how General Dynamics tried several years ago to establish data processing, telecommunications, asbestos, and ready-mix concrete businesses but failed. "General Dynamics is a defense contractor from top to bottom but had no sense of what it takes to be successful in commercial work."

At a recent forum on Long Island, where the economy has been severely damaged, a jobless defense worker asked, "How did we get to this point?" His own comment: "We seem to react instead of plan."

Too true. In recent years and decades, however, there have been voices warning of the moment that is now arriving and of the effects of militarization on the economy. Karen Pennar told readers of *Business Week* three years ago: "Defense spending diverts precious resources from the private economy, as well as from other forms of government spending that might enhance the productivity of the workforce." John E. Ullmann, an industrial engineer and professor of management and quantitative methods at Hofstra University, has been studying the problem for decades. His answer is that "the militarization of the economy during the cold war preempted capital and technical resources and landed the United States in industrial decline."

Seymour Melman of Columbia University is perhaps preeminent among the prophets who have urged attention to planning for the outbreak of peace. In his latest book, *The Demilitarized Society: Disarmament and Conversion*, he writes: "Sustained military spending is, qualitatively, the single most critical factor in the cumulative depletion of the industrial economy. If dealt with decisively then the rest can be addressed." But, he warns, "if that factor is unattended, then the rest is rendered unmanageable, and a process of continued decline is locked in place."

Though there are dissenting voices—notably Britain's *Economist* magazine—Ullman and others hold that the key to creating a healthy peacetime economy and making the road less hurtful for people is a deliberate effort to re-industrialize as well as concentrate on still innovative and strong businesses, such as aerospace, biotechnology, computers, and pharmaceuticals. Without a strong manufacturing base the nation's industrial decline will surely continue and far more jobs will disappear. Even now, should the federal government decide to rebuild our transit systems, says John Ullmann, "the equipment has to be imported in the country where electric traction was invented. The birthplace of solid state technology can't produce more than a fraction of the products that use it.... Without taking manufacturing seriously and seeing to its revival, there is no way out."

Opposition will be automatic. Employees and communities are understandably fearful of change and their politicians will cater to those fears. Cold warriors have a vested interest in manufacturing new international demons. Defense contractors will use their massive funds and influence to keep their business on permanent welfare, free of the competitive risks of private enterprise. Fears of "big government" and distrust of "planning" will be exploited.

It could be, however, that the sheer logic of the situation will force decisions. "What is at stake in conversion is nothing less than the nation's economic future," says Ullmann. "If there is one task that should now command widespread popular and political support, this is surely it. Failure to take action now would be one of the most portentous blunders in U.S. history." □

SCREEN

VISIBILITY NIL

ALLEN'S 'SHADOWS & FOG'

I'm beginning to understand why *Zelig* was one of Woody Allen's best movies. That witty fantasy dealt with a human chameleon, a man without a distinct personality who took on the characteristics of whatever milieu he encountered. As a moviemaker, Allen has that tendency himself. Every so often he tries to turn into Federico Fellini or Ingmar Bergman, and the results constitute about half—pretty much the weaker half—of the corpus of Allen's work: *Interiors, A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy, September, Another Woman* (all in the Bergman mode); *Stardust Memories, Radio Days, Alice* (Fellini mode). I'm not here repeating the old canard about Allen being authentic only when he's funny, for he was capable of making the fine somber film, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. But Woody is simply not a very good mimic. Once he abandons his own voice, he stutters.

With *Shadows and Fog*, Allen is back in his Bergman mode and he has never been so pathetically imitative. Like a weakling son who slouches and mumbles in the presence of a domineering parent, Allen is unnerved by the spiritual presence of the presiding genius that he himself has invoked. He has momentarily lost his sense of the way people talk and move and react. His comic timing, both as actor and as director, is absent, and he has let himself be dominated by his own cinematographer.

To be sure, that cameraman is the superb Carlo Di Palma, and thanks to him and to designer Santo Loquasto, this movie has a certain visual flair even if it is a nonstarter in every other respect.

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John Perrault

Palace of Justice

Learned in the law
he labeled each event
of those days
in accordance with tradition.
The legislative will
thus informed his speech
the crunch of leather in the halls
his conscience.
Dismissing rumors of rooms
below chambers
slippery with blood
he rose from the bench
each afternoon at four
drenched in his robes
never once having looked into
the eyes
of those he condemned.
On his way out
the magnificent doors
women lined in the streets
hailed him
the last hope
for loved ones missing these months
taken in the night
and no word yet.

For this story of how certain citizens of a nameless Central European town in a period that may be the 1920s respond to the onslaught of a murderous psycho, Di Palma has rendered the ingredients of the title voluptuously, in delicious layers and various shades of grey, white, and black. How colorful black-and-white can be! But, paradoxically, Di Palma's skill emphasizes rather than mitigates the ineptitude of every other element in the movie. In each gorgeous frame everyone and everything is so swathed and nuanced by the most delicate use of light and shadow that you are constantly struck by the incongruity of the undergraduate script and acting. And, though the lighting is magisterial, the placement of the camera (ultimately, the director's responsibility) is not. One scene, in particular, may haunt me forever with its stupid, pointless virtuosity. A group of prostitutes discussing the clientele is seated roughly in a circle; the camera takes a 360 degree tour of the countenances of the women with the camera coming to rest in turn on the face of each whore just as she contributes her bit to the discussion. It's a photographic stunt that not only fails to illuminate the meaning of the scene but actually contradicts it. The women are supposed to be relating to each other with their complaints and mockery of the male sex but the panning camera instead isolates each female in space and turns her face into a monstrous portrait à la Diane Arbus. One might expect this from a student filmmaker drunk on the newly discovered resources of his medium but not from a seasoned director like Allen. But, as I have noted, in a figurative presence of a master like Bergman, Allen turns into a boy.

Actually, more than one master is evoked, for elements of the story are drawn from Kafka as well as Bergman. But Allen doesn't have the courage of his own thievery. Kafkaesque themes are introduced only to be dropped midway through in favor of other themes which are also dropped before the movie is over. Allen as a wormy little clerk named Kleinman (a K hero, get it?) is drafted into a vigilante organization trying to apprehend the killer and is told that he will receive his orders from an unknown superior quite soon. So, like Kafka's Joseph K., he awaits his charge and, as in a Kafka novel, it never comes. But, unlike Kafka, Allen doesn't explore the tensions of such a psychological purgatory; he just trades in his hero's situation for a more frenetic one when Kleinman is preposterously accused of being the killer. Similarly, in a subplot, a clown (John Malkovich) from a visiting circus troupe lives in a marital hell with his sword-swallowing wife (Mia Farrow)—a situation that recalls Bergman's *The Naked Night*. The differences between the couple seem irreconcilable until the woman discovers an orphaned baby and her husband immediately becomes a doting father. Thus, a Strindbergian couple is suddenly transformed into the holy family model out of *The Seventh Seal*. Pure cop-out.

The overall situation of the insane killer threatening a community seems meant to portray the condition of mankind living under the shadow of death. But Allen makes the killer such a specific psycho that, far from accepting him as a symbol or an elemental force, you merely want to see the nut locked up. When he is first magically disarmed by a magician (another steal from Bergman, this time *The Magician*) and then evaporates into thin air, you get the symbolic point: art can divert us from death but cannot defeat it. But again, that killer is too specific to haul such symbolic freight. You merely shudder to think whose throat he will be slitting next. (How wise Camus was to make the ubiquity of death a matter of microbes in *The Plague*.)

Shadows and Fog has an all-star cast: Mia Farrow, John Malkovich, John Cusack, Madonna, Jodie Foster, Kathy Bates, Lily Tomlin, Julie Kavner, Kate Nelligan, et. al. There's something distasteful about Allen's propensity for cramming as many hot properties as possible into one movie. It's as if the actors were being used not for their talents but just to show that the director can command their loyalty even when he casts them in small parts. Loyalty seems to be the only thing he has commanded from them. *Shadows and Fog* must be the worst acted American film of the last few years. Jodie Foster working up a cackle that is supposed to be sensuously all-knowing and Julie Kavner, sawing the air and disobeying each of Hamlet's dicta to the players, are particularly revolting. John Malkovich is rather fascinating to watch because he is so bad that he comes across as mentally impaired. I detest the mousiness that Allen has imposed on Mia Farrow in their last few collaborations, and it is particularly out of place here since she is playing a circus performer used to working crowds. Allen himself dithers tiresomely. Only John

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Cusack, as a serenely self-absorbed rich kid, gives the audience something and someone interesting to watch.

RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

GO AHEAD, SHOOT

'DEATH & THE MAIDEN' & 'BABOONS'

Somewhere beneath the slick and enervating surface of Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden*, there are serious themes struggling to get out. The play is set in "a country that is probably Chile," one that has recently emerged from a dictatorship and has become, tentatively, a democracy. The question—one that is asked every day in Eastern Europe, in South and Central America, in Africa—is whether the new nearly democratic health of a country depends on the recognition and punishment of the oppressors from the past or whether the present is better served—as Mussolini's sexpot granddaughter was saying on television recently—by dismissing all that ugliness as history. In Dorfman's play there are advocates of recognition and of punishment, although not necessarily of both. Gerardo Escobar (Richard Dreyfuss) is a lawyer who has been named to a commission, with minimal power, that will investigate charges of wrongdoing—very wrongdoing—in the past. His wife, Paulina Salas (Glenn Close), who was raped and tortured in an attempt to extract information from her, is understandably obsessed by what happened to her and aches to punish the villains. Circumstances provide an occasion. Roberto Miranda (Gene Hackman), who has earlier rescued Escobar, stranded on the road by a plot device, drops by in the middle of the night to congratulate Escobar or perhaps to soften him up in case his name should come up in the hearings. Paulina recognizes (or thinks she does) Miranda as the Schubert-loving doctor who led her torturers; she ties him up, demands a mock trial, threatens to be judge and executioner.

Escobar is potentially the most interesting character. Miranda either is or is not the torture doctor; Paulina either will or will not kill him. Escobar finally sides with Miranda and feeds him information, which he may not need, for the confession Paulina demands. Escobar's motivation is nicely unclear. His distress at Paulina's homemade vengeance may result from his belief in proper legal proceedings, even though he knows that the judiciary is still shot through with appointees of the old regime; after all, *we* do not want to be like *them*. He may be afraid that Paulina's irrational behavior will wreck his career, stain his growing importance within the new government. It may be a bit of male bonding; we learn that while Paulina was under arrest, risking her life to protect Escobar's name, he was having an affair.

In the next to last scene, Escobar having been sent offstage, Paulina listens to Miranda's confession and decides to kill him anyway. After an impassioned speech about the way victims are expected to act in a civilized way ("And why does it always have to be people like me who have to sacrifice"), she holds a gun to his head and...blackout. In the published play, Dorfman asks for a mirror to descend so that the audience can see itself while a spotlight picks out one playgoer after another. This effect would presumably generalize the theme, take the play away from Paulina, who may or may not be mad, and prepare for the final scene. There, the three principals, formally dressed, arrive at a concert to hear a little Schubert. Dorfman may intend a final ambiguity to an ambiguous play—a testimony to Paulina's unwillingness to act as her torturers did, an indication that the past is to be smoothed over by social ritual, or, given the look exchanged between Paulina and Miranda, a confession that the questions the play presumably faces are questions still.

If this sounds like an interesting—even an important—play, it certainly did not seem so in the theater. Part of the problem lies with Dorfman. Although moral problems can certainly be carried by a thriller or a mystery, here the emphasis is on the is-he-or-isn't-he of Miranda and the possibility that Paulina may have been driven mad by her experience. More of the blame lies with director Mike Nichols. That blackout on the gun-wielding Paulina is a case in point. It comes across not as her hesitation, but as a directorial tease, an attempt to pump suspense into a flaccid melodrama. The three stars, all of whom have done admirable work elsewhere, seem simply to be going through the motions of performance. Everything is as elegant and sterile as Tony Walton's set. I found I did not believe in any of the characters nor care about their dilemmas which meant that it was also difficult to dig for the half-buried serious themes.

By comparison with John Guare's *Four Baboons Adoring the Sun*, *Death and the Maiden* seems positively profound. At the heart of Guare's play there is a tangle of ideas about the difficulty of telling love from lust and the dangers involved in confusing the two. Penny and Philip, having refound one another, dump their respective spouses and, finding their new marriage liberating, run off to an archaeological dig in Sicily (where Eros is hanging around), and bring the children of their two marriages to visit them. They intend their example to free the children from the pitfalls of suburban living, but they are unable to accept, until too late, his son's and her daughter's desire and/or love for one another. All this leads to death, separation, and, perhaps, rebirth for Penny and some of the children. There is some Guare jokiness, some kiddie comedy, and an overdose of pretentiousness. If the play were to work at all, it would have to have a strong underlay of passion and peril, but it is about as frightening as the animated doughnut that passes onstage for a live volcano (Tony Walton again). I found myself sympathizing not with the characters but with Stockard Channing, who worked hard to give depth to still another Guare heroine, and particularly with Eugene Perry, who plays Eros as a malevolent leprechaun and is forced to sing all his lines to Stephen Edwards's nondescript music. Put your clothes on, Perry, I wanted to say, and go see if Peter Sellars has another opera in which you can stretch yourself.

GERALD WEALES

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Breaking the frame, again

TALKING IT OVER
Julian Barnes
Alfred A. Knopf, $21, 275 pp.

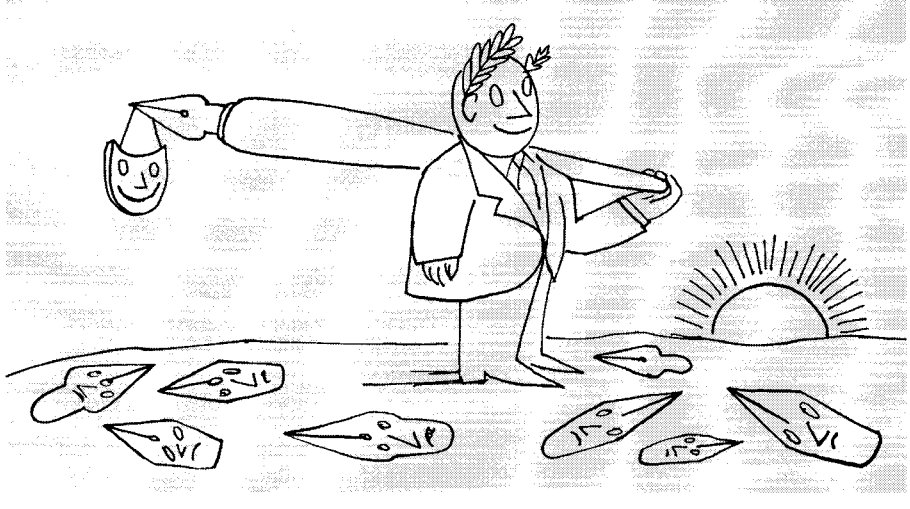
Edward T. Wheeler

Julian Barnes is an extraordinary writer. In this novel he takes an old love story, the triangle that leads from marriage to divorce and remarriage, and applies a skewed narrative geometry. He then leads a reader to illogical proofs and theorems. But paradox is nothing new to Julian Barnes's books—five novels in the last decade—or to his admirers. What he does with so apparently simple a story is all the more impressive when measured against the books which have brought him acclaim.

"Real questions were limited to those questions to which the people you asked already knew the answers...it was these questions, the ones that weren't real, to which you wanted to know the answers most pressingly." So observes a character in Barnes's *Staring at the Sun*, but the notion drives the novelist as well: Barnes looks for answers to questions that aren't real. In doing so, he writes novels which break the realist frame, get the reader to ask is this a "real" story? Is the man telling the truth or is he playing at writing fiction? To be sure, there is little in Barnes's work which gives us the reassurance of "Once upon a time...." Take *Flaubert's Parrot,* a story of a retired doctor's pursuit of the literary and real life significance of the great French novelist Flaubert. We have pages of the narrator's "real" biographical details of Flaubert, clear "factual" descriptions of Rouen, quotations from a nineteenth-century English traveler to fill out the facts (are these real quotations?), and then the question that stands in the novel's title. Is there a real Flaubert's parrot? In the fiction the stuffed bird is the grotesque but beloved manifestation of the Holy Spirit for one of Flaubert's most remarkable creations. And Barnes insinuates another question: is the parrot also a sign of the realist fiction writer's spirit, the transformation of the everyday into the grotesque imaginative world of art? And what then is the relationship between art and life? An unreal question? O, the head spins in following the plot which isn't really a plot but an imaginative and thoroughly satisfying monologue, the voice of a man who you very much wish would continue talking. He takes us from the discovery of a real, but nonexistent correspondence between Flaubert and his hitherto unknown fiancée to a set of mock university examination questions on the novelist which naturally demand answers to questions which aren't real.

Nothing of the jejune or academic here really—if thoughts of these convolutions worry you. *Flaubert's Parrot* is immensely readable, which makes the sleight of hand, the deft transformation of attention from the strings to the frame of the harp, such an imaginative answer in itself. *Staring at the Sun* although more conventional in narrative does similar things with lists. Gregory, a character developed during the last third of this brief book—how does Barnes get away with this?—plays a form of verbal chess with a computer data base called TAT. The time setting is some not too distant future, the grave end of "cradle to the grave" socialism. The result is a list of propositions about the existence of God, set among the recorded dialogues of Gregory and TAT. Barnes has already traced the life history of Jean, Gregory's mother, through a century. The quirky details of her childhood in thirties' London and her awful wartime marriage reemerge three-quarters of a century later invested with a symbolic power that seems to be the manner of Barnes's genius. Jean's golf games with her Uncle Leslie and the story of hurricane pilot Prosser and his loop into two sunrises show themselves as real signs only as the novel shifts gears into the future, as if Barnes realized what sort of dive his hurricane imagination got himself into. That is the pleasure, in part, staring at the aerobatics which mean something more than aerial display.

But the most artful bit of "frame breaking" must occur in *The History of the World*



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in 10½ Chapters (a title which denies closure or symmetry) where a color print of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* is interleaved with an extended commentary on the monumental canvas (without frame) as a metaphor of the human condition. This, of course, comes after a woodworm's narration in the first chapter about his adventures as a stowaway on the ark. By the time we get to the end of the novel, we have already been to heaven (who tells us that story anyway?) and then to the moon to find God—that after an account of a nineteenth-century English spinster's journey to Mt. Ararat for the same purpose. The book is contrived, it teases, and it offers an extraordinary vision of life—asking of course, the ultimate in unreal questions, those about God and death. So when *Talking It Over* was announced, any Barnes fan would have had to ask yet another question: What will happen next?

Naturally, this is not a conventional novel. The structure of the book again breaks the frame; there are three principal voices, supplemented by others to shift the first-person narrations and thus the "shots" we get of the conflict and characters. We have "talking-heads" and the form of the book most resembles a television play done in narration and voice-over. The reader is "you" and the various voices hypothesize that one or all of the others have also been talking to "you." Hence the language is rhetorical, manipulative. This is realism which says "I have designs on you!" and yet does it with a convention that both announces and hides itself, rather as an epistolary novel does, with just as much a demand for suspension of disbelief. The conflict is the love triangle, and Barnes is working over the terrain he plotted with tragically bloody results in an early novel, *Before She Met Me*. Yet the tone here is more comic than not and certainly the forces of love never plunge into the psychopathic. There are two ways the men have of talking "it" or love over, just as there are two marriages. Gillian is wife first to Stuart, the banker, and then to Stuart's best friend, the "classical humanist of artistic bent and romantic nature," Oliver. A zany, witty, and "riffing" monologist, Oliver provides us with the metaphors of talk. One comes from Gillian's occupation, restoring old canvases, and the other from Stuart's banking and currency exchange. Gillian confesses that the revelation of what could not be seen in a touched-up or dirty old oil painting is her chief delight: she waits for the revelation of what is to be discovered, if the right solvents are applied. And this gives Oliver a way to justify his pursuit of his best friend's wife. He is stripping the painting of their three lives and asserting his own truth with corrosive brilliance.

> Oh effulgent relativity! There is no "real" picture under there waiting to be revealed. What I've always said about life itself. We may scrape and spit and dab and rub, until the point when we declare that the truth stands plain before us...but it isn't so! It's just my word against everybody else's!

In talking "love" over, Oliver says that he can apply the principle of "reversibility" and take away the problem of husband Stuart. But the relativity which helps, also hinders, and Oliver is forced to contend with more than Stuart's rubbed-out image. To do so he applies again the acid wit of his riffs:

> [Love and money] both go where they wist, reckless of what they leave behind. Love too has its buy-outs, its asset-stripping, its junk bonds. Love rises and falls in value like currency. And confidence is *such* a key to maintaining its value.

Both metaphors make love a matter of confidence, of saying it is so. The conflict of the novel comes in the real problems of living with metaphors, of acting them out. Oliver and Stuart trade words and Gillian has a child. In a sense the words can't resolve the talk; indeed only action can. And in a harrowing fight concocted by Gillian in order to save her family, she forces Oliver and Stuart to play out a scene of closure. Oliver quips somewhere that if love is like money then marriage is the bill; Gillian knows that they are in Stuart's debt. Market forces push love down, out of the way; to save her marriage, Gillian corners the market on accusation and makes herself pay with deception and Oliver with two blows to her face. We, the we who are "you," assume that Stuart takes this as proof that the market makes him better off. Gillian has both stripped down and painted in their old domestic canvas. Stuart never comments on what he sees. Where Oliver, Gillian, and child end up, we don't know.

The narrative method gives us no assurance that voices might not resume at another, later time. If the novel tropes on reversibility, then perhaps only the child, Sophie, can stop market forces from driving love the other way. This is not melodrama, cannot be. We find no easy allegiances with the wronged. Breaking the frame denies the assurance of climax. What is left at the end is the virtuoso voice, three voices really, not the sense that plot has recapitulated life. Artifice has made life like itself, contrived and only as conclusive as the words of the maker. We are left asking unreal questions for which there are no real answers.

All this seems to make the book bear a burden that never weighs it in the reading. Oliver's voice always entertains; Stuart's and Gillian's have growing and sympathetic dignity; perhaps the most remarkable achievement of all is the voice of Gillian's mother, a sibylline Anglo-French woman

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who takes the book into proverbial utterance. She initiates a rush of apothegms, many of them contradictory, from each of the voices. They suggest the stalemate of opposing absolutes: a world divided by points of view, by voices which cannot agree on premises.

The book's pleasures, beyond the "riffs" and maxims, lie in the directness of the realism: Stuart's complaint that what hurts him is that Gillian never realized that he depipped the grapefruit he served her every weekend; the deaf dog who is killed at the novel's end; the greengrocer who misspells with unnecessary apostrophe; the plaque in the pavement commemorating the destruction of a building by zeppelin raid in 1915. This carefully rendered world, so real even as it is chopped about with shifting perspectives, sounds within the broken frame. And that dissonance has its own meaning.

Julian Barnes is an extraordinary writer. What he does with the old story of love, marriage, and divorce is in its own way as much an achievement as *History of the World*. In this novel, less is more, and "you" are left giving answers to familiar and unreal questions. □

1648 & ALL THAT

THE DELUGE
Henryk Sienkiewicz (translated by W.S. Kuniczak)
Copernicus Society of America with Hippocrene Books, $45, two volumes, 1,761 pp.

Mark O'Connor

It is customary in European history to treat 1648 as a watershed. In Western Europe the Peace of Westphalia concluded the most ruinous episode in the wars of religion, allowing the steady consolidation and expansion of power in various countries to form what theorists came to term the "well-ordered" state. In Eastern Europe that same year is just as crucial, but here the opposite tendency took hold in its dominant state, the ever less well-ordered Polish Commonwealth. 1648 marked the beginning of the Cossack rebellion against the Polonized great magnates of the steppes, and when, six years later, the Cossacks under Khmelnytsky allied themselves with Muscovy in their struggle against the Poles, the balance of power in Eastern Europe was irrevocably altered. While the Cossacks continued their struggle "with fire and sword," Russian armies invaded the commonwealth, ravaging large portions of Lithuania.

The stage was set for Swedish intervention and the catastrophe known in Polish history as *potop*, "the deluge." Having fled Sweden in 1652 after plotting against King Jan Kazimierz, Poland's vice-chancellor, Radziejowski, urged Charles X Gustavus to exploit these propitious circumstances. With the premier army in Europe, battle-hardened in the Thirty Years War and now needing to be kept occupied—preferably on the other side of the Baltic—Charles hardly needed prompting. Nevertheless other voices out of the commonwealth also urged him on. Many of its leading families treated King Jan Kazimierz with open contempt, just as they once had his Swedish father, Sigismund Vasa. Sigismund owed his throne to the most powerful of Poland's magnates, Jan Zamoyski, who openly referred to his nominal ruler as "our dumb phantom imported from Sweden." In Jan Kazimierz's case, his earlier career in the Society of Jesus and as a cardinal did not inspire confidence in these most martial of times. With Lithuania feeling the Russian scourge, its Calvinist grand hetman Janusz Radziwill thought it prudent to trade this Catholic Vasa for the Protestant Vasa with his state-of-the-art army. Once the Swedes had severed Lithuania's connection to Poland and ousted the Russians, Radziwill thought he would be able to oust the Swedes in turn and rule Lithuania independently. Various other of the magnate families, the Opalinskis and the Lubomirskis especially, nurtured private ambitions of their own. And then the deluge: Swedish armies swept over the commonwealth in 1655 as the magnates ushered them in like locks opening their gates to the sea.

Thus the heroes of *The Deluge*, the centerpiece of Henryk Sienkiewicz's brilliant trilogy, have had the bad luck to be born in, as the Chinese curse goes, interesting times. We already know our "three musketeers"—Skrzetuski, Wolodyjowski, and Zagloba—well, for their adventures in the struggle to suppress the Cossacks constitute *With Fire and Sword*, the first portion of the trilogy. The principal hero of *The Deluge*, Andrzej Kmicic, is a complex and contradictory d'Artagnan, destined to be tested by the most interesting times of all. For Kmicic embodies all the faults that have made Poland's stunning collapse possible. He is egotistical, willful, and rash. His conscience and judgment have been formed in war, but not through the conventional military training which has turned Skrzetuski and Wolodyjowski into models of classical valor. Instead his immersion in guerrilla warfare has made him a scourge to the Russians and the local populace alike. Unable to distinguish "good" from "bad" brigandry, his actions cost him the one thing in life which really matters, the respect of his beloved Olenka.

Kmicic is seduced into a false redemption by Janusz Radziwill, who is astute enough to see the potential of this fiery soldier, and wins Kmicic over to his grand design under false pretenses. Having this

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time betrayed not just himself but his commonwealth, Kmicic in his disgrace becomes a wandering knight. For such a sinner—and such a sinning nation—real redemption is possible only at the holiest of Poland's shrines, Czestochowa. "Babinicz" (Kmicic's Christian conversion must, of course, be represented in a new name) becomes part of the heroic resistance that ever since has formed the core of Polish national/religious consciousness. Together Kmicic/Babinicz and his nation are reborn. From the "bright hill" crowned by Czestochowa will flow forth a second deluge, as all elements of Polish society rise up to sweep the Swedes back across the Baltic.

Quite a rousing story! Sienkiewicz knew the complicated history of this period well, and masterfully weaves together the real players in these intricate games of war and diplomacy with other historical individuals (Kmicic, for example) whom he refashions for his own purposes. Then there are figures such as Zagloba who so perfectly represent the "Sarmatian" spirit of the petty *szlachta* nobility that they have to be fictional. These images still delight, and often persuade. My personal favorites are to be found in the walled city of Zamosc where we meet Jan Zamoyski's descendent, who carries his name but not his greatness, leading the life of a "good ol' boy" seventeenth-century *szlachta* style. "Sobiepan" (king of his castle), as he likes to call himself, lives together with his sister and her son. Princess Gryzelda is the widow of Poland's fiercest warrior in the Cossack wars. She is every bit as tough. The son, however, is not: Sienkiewicz makes the prince's soft belly quiver at the sight of a banquet table. In this way our chronicler lets us know where he thinks the character faults of future King Michal Korybut took root. Sienkiewicz drew extensively on period documents, and melded their substance and language with his own to create a superb style which makes him still one of the richest voices in the Polish language.

That richness has inspired me three times over the years to read *Potop* and follow the adventures of Kmicic as a way of gauging my progress in comprehending Polish. My trials and tribulations, fair to say, provide me with a certain perspective on W.S. Kuniczak's new translation. Just how good is it? In a word, terrific. Good enough to make me curl up again as soon as I could with this 2,000-page book when the translation's quality was already obvious by the prologue and when, after all, there were more than a few other interesting ways to spend my time. To be sure, the historian in me grumbled to see "Kmicic" become "Kmita" in this version, and I do think the translator sells his English-speaking audience short by thinking it necessary to spell all these formidable Slavic names phonetically. But these are quibbles. The story's the thing, and Sienkiewicz's verve has been captured wonderfully. Thank you, Mr. Kuniczak. You've given us all a wonderful gift. □

PROVOCATIVE POLEMICS

THE DE-VALUING OF AMERICA
The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children
William J. Bennett
Summit Books, $20, 320 pp.

William G. Mayer

By most accounts, Ronald Reagan's first choice to become chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities was Melvin Bradford, an English professor from the University of Dallas with ties to Jesse Helms. But Bradford came under fire for writings which suggested that the Civil War was wrong because it infringed on Southern property rights; and even in the heady conservative days of 1981, that was a little excessive. So the job fell instead to a little-known philosophy professor named William Bennett; and as liberals soon discovered, they probably got the worst of the deal. Bennett was not only as conservative as the Reaganites could have hoped for; he was also a considerably more savvy and effective politician than Bradford would ever have been. Bennett left government service in 1990, and he has now written a book about that service.

The *De-Valuing of America* is something of a cross between a policy analysis and a personal memoir—and it is precisely this hybrid character that will probably leave many readers feeling slightly unsatisfied. For as often happens with a book that tries to do two things, it never does either one especially well. Those who are looking for a detailed and original discussion of education, drugs, or any of the other issues Bennett dealt with, will find only a rather cursory treatment. But those looking for an interesting personal account of life in the Reagan administration will feel equally unrequited. Because he does spend so much time talking about the issues he dealt with, and defending the policy stands he took, Bennett gives us only a fragmentary account of his own activities.

Bennett was undeniably in a good position to write either kind of book. He held three major positions during the Reagan and Bush administrations, which had one major thing in common: all were at the center of some of the most controversial and divisive cultural issues of the last two decades. From 1981 to 1985, he was chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, where he dealt with questions about government's role in subsidizing artistic and cultural productions, and what kinds of controls, if any, government should place on such monies. From 1985 to 1989, he was secretary of education, where he spoke out on such topics as school prayer, discipline, the teaching of "Western culture," and tuition vouchers. And then he was "drug czar" (more specifically, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy) from 1989 to 1990. (He also served a very brief stint as chairman of the Republican National Committee after the death of Lee Atwater.)

All of these issues receive some attention in this book. Beyond the specific anec-

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dotes and programs, however, there is a central theme that runs through most of Bennett's policy discussions: the importance of values in formulating public policy, and the problems that contemporary liberalism has created for itself by trying to operate as if such values were only an intrusive and unnecessary presence. None of this analysis is ground-breaking, but it is intelligently and clearly presented.

As a memoir, Bennett's book is blessedly free of the sort of back-stabbing and revelations that have become an expected part of recent political memoirs. He expresses admiration for both Reagan and Bush; he takes a few potshots at liberals like Ted Kennedy—but did anyone expect him to do otherwise? What he *doesn't* do, unfortunately, is to provide a sustained and coherent narrative about any of the jobs he held or the policy initiatives he tried to further.

In the two chapters he has written about his tenure as secretary of education, for example, we are first told about the failures of American schools and the resistance and apathy of the teachers' unions and educational bureaucrats. Bennett then provides his own diagnosis of the problem, and defends the need for a more substantive curriculum, greater accountability, and parental choice. In the following chapter, he describes some of the most successful teachers and administrators he met while visiting schools around the country. Lots of it makes interesting reading; but we learn, in the end, surprisingly little about Bennett's own work in government. What became of all the initiatives he tried to promote? Was a voucher bill ever even introduced? What did Bennett actually accomplish besides (as he puts it) using his office as a "bully pulpit" to "broaden the public discussion on education reform"? When his chapters on education come to an end, we have no solid answers to any of these questions.

Yet the book does have some substantial strengths, particularly if one regards it less as a historical narrative than as the kind of "what's wrong with America" book that so many political figures have tried to write over the last few decades. Compared to similar works by Paul Tsongas, Gary Hart, Paul Simon, and Barney Frank, Bennett's book clearly stands out as more thoughtfully and carefully executed. If *The De-Valuing of America* is unlikely to win many converts to Bennett's cause, it may provide a successful rallying cry for the faithful. And it also offers an interesting glimpse into the mind and career of one of the most capable and effective advocates in contemporary American conservatism. □

AND THE BEAT GOES ON

THE PORTABLE BEAT READER
Edited by Ann Charters
Viking Penguin, $25, 642 pp.

Harold Isbell

In detailing the complex interplay of influence among these writers and the various strands of the literary tradition which they chose to follow or reject, Ann Charters provides a compelling and fascinating account of a few who launched a literary aesthetic, a revolution of ideas, that in another decade would become a social and political revolution. "The beats" began as a small group of writers centered around William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac in New York City. Ginsberg and Kerouac later migrated to the West Coast where they contacted what was beginning to be called "The San Francisco Renaissance." With the participation of writers like Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Kenneth Rexroth, Michael McClure, and Gary Snyder, to name only a few, the movement took on a quite remarkable vitality.

This anthology includes generous samples of major and minor pieces in the beat canon. Particularly valuable now are Charters's introductions to the various authors and their work. At the beginning of the beat movement the three major works were Ginsberg's two long poems, "Howl" and "Kaddish," and Kerouac's novel, *On the Road*. However, to restrict one's reading to these three works is to miss the substantial accomplishment as well as the delightfully wild and crazy flavor of the whole.

In much of this work there was a persisting reference to the nineteenth-century Romantics, particularly Coleridge and Blake, for their devotion to mystical experience and altered states of mind. But while thousands of adolescents and young adults were learning to sip espresso in dimly lit basements and all too gladly letting themselves be called "beatniks," the beats themselves were proclaiming loudly that their drug of choice was virtually anything but caffeine. For Ginsberg to announce that he wrote "Kaddish" while taking a combination of heroin, methedrine, and dexedrine was certainly startling to most of the American public.

The period has a pervasive tone of the raffish and the playful, if not the antisocial. At a time when the country was long overdue for change the beats entered the scene and declared their freedom from virtually everything. While these writers abandoned much of accepted literary convention, especially the New Criticism, they also and most aggressively declared their independence of earlier sexual and social mores.

Charters succeeds very well at detailing the importance of the bohemian way of life to the movement, even to repeating the entirely charming and very revealing anecdote that at the now-famous reading of the six poets at The Six Gallery in San Francisco in October 1955 Ginsberg appeared on stage dressed in a gray suit with a white shirt and a tie while Snyder wore blue jeans. Earlier, Ginsberg had arrived in San Francisco bearing a letter of introduction to Kenneth Rexroth from his one-time physician and later mentor, William Carlos Williams. Today this might well seem to be a benign respectability balancing a gentle eccentricity. More correctly, perhaps, the reality in spite of these appearances lay somewhere between a dedication to the most outrageous bohemian ethos and a strong residue of near innocence.

Ferlinghetti's role was critical: he was

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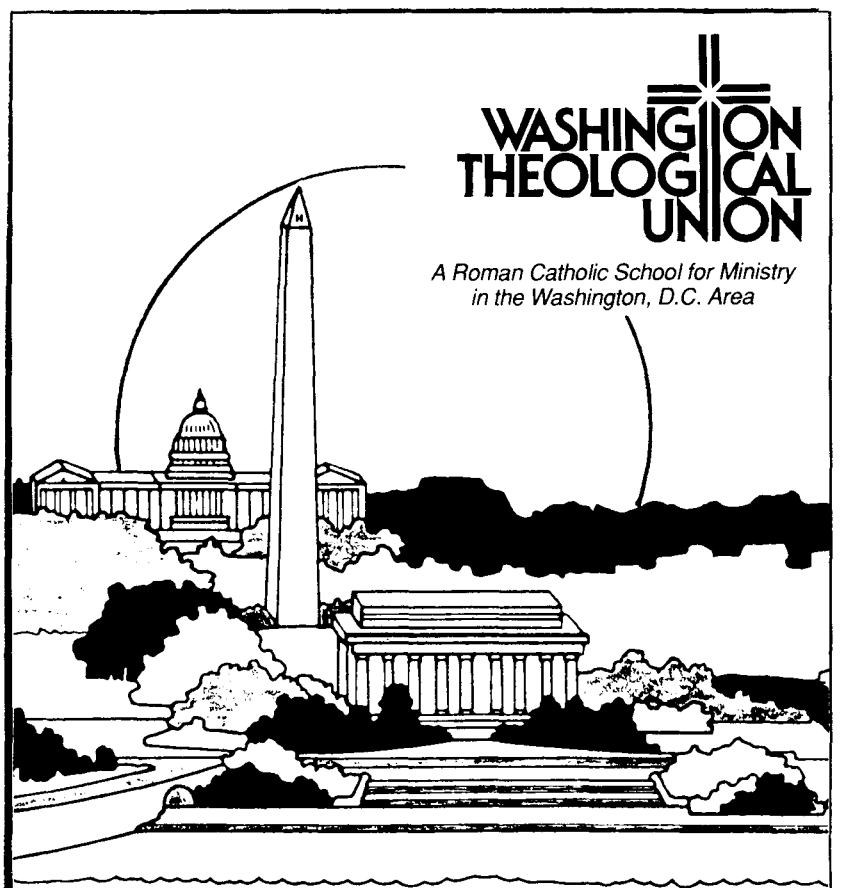
in the audience at The Six Gallery and after the reading offered to publish Ginsberg's "Howl" as a title in *The Pocket Poets Series* which his City Lights Books had begun. The pamphlet—*Howl and Other Poems*—was published in 1956 as fourth in the series. With an introduction by William Carlos Williams ("I never thought he would live to grow up and write a book of poems") and a dedication to Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, its place in American literature was asserted.

Fortunately for all concerned, the San Francisco Police Department brought a charge of obscenity against the publisher and the resulting trial with its publicity caused the book to go into many more printings than ever expected. More than thirty-five years later it is still in print and, presumably, still selling. In 1957 a verdict of "not guilty" was returned and almost at the same time an unusually enthusiastic review of *On the Road* appeared in the *New York Times*.

The rich prose cadences of Michael McClure are quoted by Charters to show the real thrust of the movement: "None of us wanted to go back to the gray, chill, militaristic silence, to the intellective void—to the land without poetry—to the spiritual drabness. We wanted to make it new and we wanted to invent it and the process of it as we went into it. We wanted voice and we wanted vision." These writers sought their inspiration in the literature of alienation, Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* and the poems of Whitman and Artaud, as well as Pound's dictum, "Make it New." At the same time, they were intensely autobiographical in their selection of material while the tradition gave them a ready, if somewhat unexpected, shape for the work they would produce, a work radically new and profoundly generative.

As the years passed they went on writing and exploring issues which at the beginning had been laid out so urgently and stridently. The final sections of the anthology provide generous and representative selections from the poetry and prose of most of those who continued writing. It is fascinating to watch a maturity of years give rise to a maturity of style and content. Perhaps it is one of the supreme ironies that having begun as a harsh indictment of every aspect of the establishment this body of material enters mainstream literature in an anthology of such distinction. Achieving a degree of respectability that will never quite escape their astonishing beginnings, the outsiders become an establishment.

Some books tell us what we have been, others what we will be; but a very few books define a moment after which most of us were never quite the same again. *The Portable Beat Reader* is that kind of book: a compelling and fascinating account of a few writers who began a process of change that led to quite unexpected results. □



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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

with more authority: *semper, ubique, ab omnibus.* That is Bishop Flavin's point, and that is no distortion.

Father Connors next asserts "legitimate theological dissent," as if naming it "legitimate" makes it legitimate. In sacred theology, it helps a great deal to locate something in one of the sacred sources: Scripture, tradition, and magisterium. To my knowlege, there is no sacred source to ground theological dissent. Conventional theology does address a "lack of internal assent," but the conversion of that negative into an alleged positive right to dissent is more often stated than demonstrated.

Connors next criticizes the bishop for the expression "sinful practice." In a pedantic sense, we should all speak only of acts that are intrinsically evil (disordered), and, in that sense, no act is intrinsically "sinful," if by that we mean individuals must always take account of sufficient knowledge and sufficient consent for purposes of subjective responsibility or imputability.

This, of course, is why we teach "fundamentals" in fundamental moral theology—one reason being, we don't then have to repeat every presumption in every chapter, on every subject in every talk or article. I do the same in fundamental theology, as I'm sure Father Connors does. From my limited knowledge of Bishop Flavin I can assure Connors that the bishop faithfully and fully accepts and teaches all the fundamentals of received Catholic moral teaching.

Lastly, Connors criticizes the bishop for his "silence about the role of conscience formation." Is it possible to miss so magnificently the bishop's obvious point? The whole point and purpose of the bishop's pastoral teaching is to contribute to a correct formation of a correct Catholic conscience, entirely in accord with the Vatican II decree (*Dignitatis humanae*) to attend to the "certain and sacred doctrine of the church" in this serious matter.

In a related attack, Robert G. Hoyt dismisses not only Bishop Flavin but also Pope John Paul II. In a missive that barely rises above sheer sarcasm, Hoyt generously concedes that one should take the pope (any pope) seriously, but "an honestly formed conscience is to be followed."

As with Connors, so with Hoyt, no mention whether that conscience is correct or erroneous; no mention of the prior and primary responsibility to form a correct Catholic conscience.

Yes, one can act on a certain conscience; one can act (or not act) on a certain and erroneous conscience. But, as the pope teaches, no conscience, including his, is autonomous. No one, neither Robert Hoyt nor John Paul II, is exempt from the truth, no matter how "honestly" they have formed some "dishonesty" in conscience.

The unguided missile (autonomous conscience) is something Cardinal Newman described as a counterfeit, something eighteen prior centuries never heard of and could not mistake for it—it is the "right" of self-will.

Both essays in your publication could be greatly enhanced by a careful study of Cardinal Ratzinger's presentation to our U.S. bishops, "Conscience and Truth" (February 1991, Dallas).

Your authors may not like what Bishop Flavin, Cardinal Ratzinger, and Pope John Paul II teach, but please, spare us the pain and arrogance of saying they misrepresent or distort official church teaching, or that they have it wrong.

MONSIGNOR WILLIAM B. SMITH

The writer is professor of moral theology at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie.

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To the Editors: I think it would be a good idea for *Commonweal* to publish the full text of Bishop Flavin's pastoral letter, the subject of Rev. Russell B. Connors's criticism, to allow readers to see what the bishop was actually saying. In the limited space allowed me, I wish to comment on the first of Connors's objections, and only parts of that.

Connors thinks he has been mandated, by his degree from the Alfonsiana, to "explore and explain our theological tradition." Bishop Flavin, of course, has been mandated by Jesus Christ to "teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles," "correcting, reproving, appealing, constantly teaching, and never losing patience" (2 Tim. 4:2). There need not be a conflict between the theological tradition and the ordinary teaching magisterium. If there is, the benefit of the doubt goes to the latter. We know there is no conflict between divine revelation and the living tradition. The living tradition of the church is not to be identified with theology, theologians, and their schools of thought. The living tradition contains all that Christ revealed to his church but was never recorded in the written Scriptures.

Connors has three main objections. The first is the source and authority of the church's moral teachings. Flavin teaches that Christ founded his church as the means "through which he would continue to teach and guide and sanctify mankind until the end of the world." He continues: "Christ...is still in the world today as he promised, teaching us through his church what we must believe and how we must live; and the voice of his church is the successor of Peter, now Pope John Paul." This is the traditional understanding of the church.

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The magisterium, or teaching authority of the church vested primarily in Peter, the Twelve, and their successors, teaches on behalf of Christ on matters of both faith *and morals*. New moral questions emerge which demand an answer. Christ ensured that the faithful would have access to good moral guidance through the magisterium. He did not give this mandate to a single theologian.

Connors objects that this does not represent traditional Catholic teaching. *Lumen gentium* and *Dignitatis humanae* would not support him. He thinks Flavin disregards distinctions among degrees of authority in Catholic teachings. He thinks that *Humanae vitae* was not proposed infallibly, is still debatable as to its being divinely revealed and obligatory, and that moralists can safely encourage Catholics to reject it, after thoughtful consideration. Of course, if a teaching one disagrees with can be shown to belong to a lower level of teaching authority, then it can be effectively dismissed.

Connors's more fundamental problem is that he does not think that the church's authority to teach the mind of God applies equally to matters of faith *and morals*. He can accept, on the strength of divine revelation, that Jesus is the Son of God, but he cannot accept the church's authority to teach that contraception is "gravely immoral, intrinsically evil, and contrary to the law of nature and nature's God," to quote Flavin. For Connors, the church can insist upon teachings of faith, but she can only speculate about matters of morality. Apparently what we do is not as important as what we believe. Connors, like many other moralists today, can accept broad and vague moral principles which really do not touch us, but they are reluctant to endorse more specific moral norms like "contraception is always wrong."

If the magisterium can clearly declare certain kinds of human acts to be immoral, evil, contrary to God, then this confines theological dissent. But Connors's view suggests that theologians sit in judgment on the magisterium, and that they will determine for the faithful whether papal teaching should be followed, or safely ignored because it lacks a sufficient level of authority or sufficiently compelling reasons.

A copy of my full critique of Connors may be had upon request.

MATTHEW HABIGER, O.S.B.

The writer is special assistant with Human Life International. Requests for his full text may be sent to him at 7845 Airpark Road, Suite E, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.

The author replies (I):

Fragments. The letters from Professor May, Monsignor Smith, and Father Habiger cause me to wonder whether they received the complete text of my response to Bishop Flavin's pastoral letter. Their concerns and charges seem based on bits and pieces of what I wrote. Similarly, their interpretations of the bishop's letter seem based only on parts of the letter rather than the full text. Let me offer these responses.

First, the pastoral letter *I* read referred to the practice of contraception and physicians' cooperation with it not only as "intrinsically evil" or "gravely immoral," but as "gravely sinful" or simply "a grave sin." It is worth noting that May and Smith—both experienced teachers of theology—avoid these latter terms to describe contraception, as does official Catholic teaching from *Humanae vitae* forward. If Bishop Flavin had stayed with the language of "intrinsically evil" rather than "sinful" I would not have written my critique.

The point is that Catholic tradition recognizes a very important difference between the two. It is one thing to judge an action to be objectively immoral or wrong; it is quite another to judge persons to be personally, subjectively sinful, so much so that their participation in the Eucharist would be sacrilegious. I remain convinced that the bishop's letter distorts Catholic teaching on this important point. May and Smith want to assure us of what Bishop Flavin *meant* to say. My critique concerns what he *did* say.

Second, in different ways, Professor May, Monsignor Smith, and Father Habiger express grave concerns that I have denied the teaching authority of the church, trivialized the authoritative status of the teaching in *Humanae vitae*, or even encouraged Catholics to reject the teaching. Again, I wonder whether all three received defective copies of that issue of *Commonweal*, containing only fragments of my article. In any case, I believe I have done none of those things. What I wrote points out that *Humanae vitae*'s teaching about contraception is based fundamentally on the natural law, and therefore the "deeply reasonable" nature of the teaching should be accessible to all. I have suggested that the contribution of a bishop's pastoral letter on this topic ought not simply be an appeal to authority but should include an attempt to shed light on the reasonable nature of the teaching. This reflects the fact that the moral life is not simply a matter of obedience to norms and laws, but involves conforming one's life to the truth that the intellect is able to comprehend.

On conscience formation, my article recalled that Catholics are charged to "diligently attend to" the teachings of the church in order that "their hearts might be moved by gospel values and their minds informed by the Spirit-filled teachings of the church so that they can make reasonable and loving moral judgments and decisions." That does not sound to me like encouraging the faithful to reject Catholic teaching.

A final comment. My critique of Bishop

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Flavin's letter has caused Monsignor Smith to label me one of those "nuanced dissenters." I think Father Habiger would like to charge me with something worse. In fact, my critique was that the bishop should have stayed with the categories and language of Paul VI in describing contraception. His deviation from that language led him to distort Catholic teaching in ways that could have a damaging impact on some conscientious Catholics. To borrow a word from Monsignor Smith, I find it "amazing" that an appeal to use the language of Paul VI to describe contraception constitutes dissent.

REV. RUSSELL B. CONNORS, JR.

The author replies (II):

Professor May has it partly wrong in his recollection of that once-famous 1961 flap over William F. Buckley, Jr. and *National Review*. Much of it had to do with a snippet that appeared in the magazine shortly after the publication of Pope John XXIII's first encyclical: "Going the rounds in Catholic conservative circles: '*Mater, sí, Magistra, no.*'" The sentence—a take-off on Fidel Castro's then-current slogan, "*Cuba sí, Yanqui, no*"—was crafted not by Buckley but by Garry Wills, who intended it not as a manifesto but as a wisecrack (one he later confessed was too flippant, therefore ill-advised).

This episode has some current, personal relevance. When I first read *Mater et magistra* I practically swooned with joy. I disliked Garry Wills's wisecrack, and I detested *National Review*'s editorial (which described the encyclical as a "venture in triviality"). But when many of my colleagues (I was then a diocesan editor) responded by more or less reading Bill Buckley out of the church, piling anathema upon angry anathema, I demurred: "We could stand a lot of silence from Buckley, but we don't want it forced on him." The outcry against him, I said, confirmed the fear that "the American Catholic consensus is hardening into a party line that won't admit of argumentation, or strong differences of opinion."

It was a consensus I shared, a liberal stance toward most social and economic questions. In promoting our views on such issues and in debates with Buckley and his ilk, we American Catholic liberals made liberal use of the authority of Pius XII and John XXIII (both considerably to the left of the American mainstream)—sometimes exaggerating that authority to the point of contributing to what liberals now call "creeping infallibilism."

So Professor May is partly right. I criticized the witch-hunt against Buckley for the same reason that I criticized Bishop Flavin: because what Buckley's foes said then and Bishop Flavin's supporters are saying now leaves out of consideration the careful and time-honored restrictions the Catholic church places on the reach of its own authority. I said in my column that being Catholic entails being seriously and respectfully attentive to the pope; but I don't believe that all the teachings of all the pastors of the church are always "Spirit-filled," or that every word of every encyclical or papal allocution binds the consciences of all Catholics in every respect forevermore.

Neither do Professor May, Monsignor Smith, and Father Habiger. They know, for example, that in the wake of *Humanae vitae* a number of national hierarchies issued statements explaining what Father Connors said in his article, what I said (though with less precision) in my column, and what Bishop Flavin failed to say in his pastoral. Presumably May, Smith, and Habiger think it's dangerous to qualify the binding character of authentic magisterial teachings. I think it's dangerous *not* to do so, when the qualifications derive from equally authentic, centuries-old, and deeply Catholic traditions.

Monsignor Smith takes aim at "nuanced dissenters" who won't argue the merits or demerits of contraception but change the subject to questions of authority and conscience formation. My subject was not contraception but Bishop Flavin's wholly unnuanced use of authority, but I'm willing to change the subject, while noting (a) that Monsignor Smith's own letter says nothing about why contraception is to be condemned, beyond reminding us that *Humanae vitae* and *Casti connubii* condemn it; and (b) that everything I will say here has been said before, then rebutted, then reaffirmed, and so on, many times since 1968. But there may be readers who have come late to this party.

Paul VI argued that anyone (Catholic or otherwise) who respects the natural law and studies the realities of gendered human nature will be able to see that using contraceptives divorces the unitive aspect of intercourse from its procreative aspect and thereby frustrates nature; therefore no couple should make love while using artificial means to avoid making a baby. "Artificial" includes use of condoms, anovulant pills, intrauterine devices; it does not include use of the calendar, the thermometer, or cervical litmus tests to determine the woman's periods of infertility, during which periods the sexual act is said to be "open to the transmission of life," even though, according to proponents of "natural" family planning, the latest research shows that couples are most unlikely to make any babies while using the method. That, in fact, is the whole point of NFP.

I have always said that what the encyclical says may be true but that I can't see it. It seems to me obvious that both "artificial" and "natural" methods can be used by couples with a "contraceptive mentality" (antibaby, antilife, self-pandering) or by couples who want to solidify their marriages, to forge union, literally to "make love" at times or in circumstances when pregnancy would be medically dangerous or otherwise seriously disruptive; in short, that a couple's purpose in preventing conception is more important than the mechanics of the act. This could mean that I lack either the brains or the spiritual discernment to grasp what the pope called the "deeply reasonable" character of his argument; or that I have not tried hard enough to form my conscience with limpid openness to the church's guidance. If so, these lacks are shared by hundreds of millions of lay Catholics, tens of thousands of priests and religious, hundreds or (more likely) thousands of theologians and ethicists, and, one suspects, not a few bishops. I will be told that counting noses doesn't determine moral norms. I agree.

Finally, Monsignor Smith probably has it right about my use of sarcasm. A couple of years after the "*Mater, sí*" imbroglio John Courtney Murray said of *Pacem in terris* some of what *National Review* had said of *Mater et magistra*; but Murray's comments appeared in *America*, a chief Buckley-basher, and he spoke in kinder,

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gentler terms, so that he remained in good standing with Catholic liberals.

For a more nuanced study of the interrelationship between freedom and authority, conscience and command in the Catholic church, I would recommend (to liberals and conservatives alike) a reading of *Politics and Catholic Freedom* (Regnery, 1964), which Garry Wills undertook in order to examine the deeper implications of the anti-Buckley crusade of the early '60s; and his later book, *Confessions of a Conservative* (Doubleday, 1979), which appeared after the publication of *Humanae vitae*. As epigraph for the earlier book, Wills chose a quote from Lord Acton: "Knowledge has a freedom in the Catholic church which you will find in no other religion, though there, as elsewhere, freedom degenerates unless it has to struggle in its own defense."

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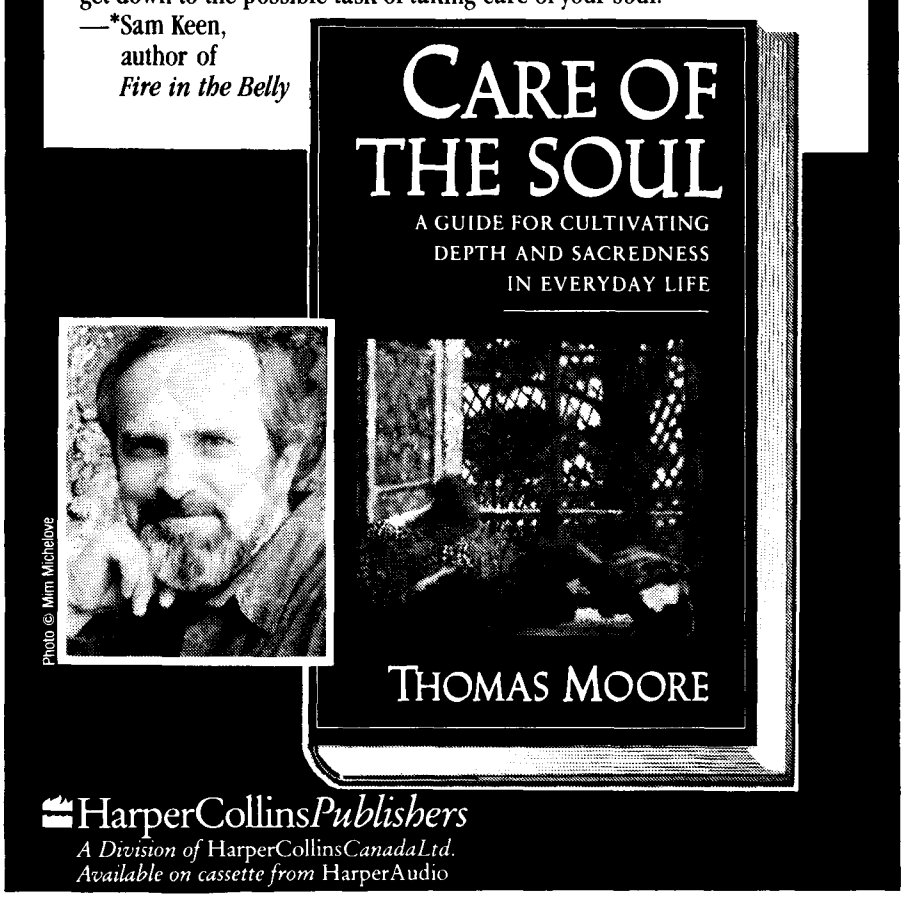

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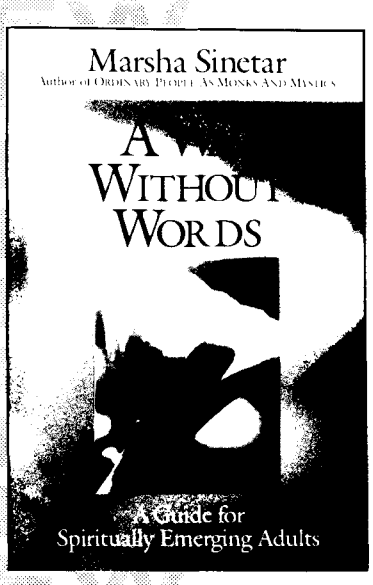
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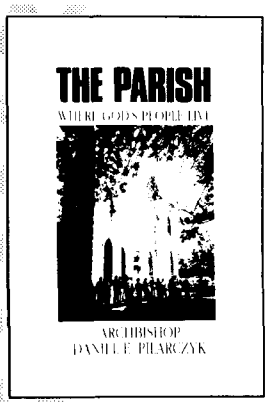

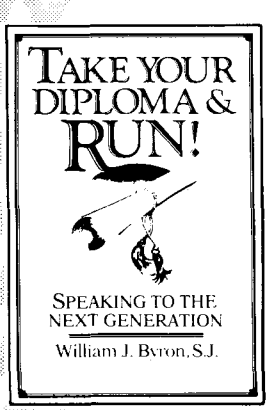

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